



## What's a girl to do?

The Duchess and the bank that can't say no

Section Two

## Questions of sport:

£40,000 to be won

New scratch card in Saturday's paper  
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## Paris awaits the plumber's son

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PM rebuts leadership rumours

# Shaky Major bows to right over Europe

DONALD MACINTYRE

John Major yesterday unexpectedly bowed to Eurosceptic pressure by ordering a White Paper on Europe as he and party managers moved urgently to defuse a fresh bout of speculation about his leadership.

In a move which took senior Tories by surprise, Mr Major ignored calls from the Tory left not to risk re-opening the debate on Europe by publishing a White Paper. Instead, the Cabinet accepted Mr Major's recommendation to publish one before the intergovernmental conference on the EU's future begins on 29 March.

The White Paper was announced as Mr Major dismissed as "silly speculation" a fresh spate of reports suggesting that he could face a plot to unseat him after the wholesale losses - of up to 800 out of over 1,000 contested council seats - which the party fears in the May local elections.

While opinion differed sharply among senior opponents of Mr Major over whether such a challenge was feasible - let alone capable of success - Sir Marcus Fox, chairman of the 1922 committee, took the highly unusual step of issuing a statement saying the reports were "ludicrous".

The Prime Minister yesterday visited the Commons tea-room after telling MPs in the Chamber: "We have had this silly speculation almost every week there's a Thursday in. It's been nonsense in the past and it's nonsense now." According to one MP who spoke to him in the tea-room, Mr Major suggested that he knew who had planted the story and implied that it was a figure in the Lords rather than the Commons.

As the former Tory chairman Sir Norman Fowler also rejected the reports but acknowledged that there was a "maverick minority" who might want to unseat Mr Major, it emerged that senior members



John Major: Talk of a plot is just 'silly speculation'

of the Tory parliamentary party are determined to resist aspirations by constituency parties to be given a formal voice in choosing future party leaders.

The issue has taken on a new importance because of signs that the executive of the 1922 committee are reluctant to decide radical changes to the leadership rules which could constitutionally preclude a further leadership challenge to Mr Major before the general election.

Lord Feldman, chairman of the party's National Union - the Tory voluntary wing - has floated the idea (at a meeting last

## Surprise cut in interest rates

The Chancellor, Kenneth Clarke, came to the rescue of a beleaguered John Major with a cut in interest rates that caught the City napping. The quarter point reduction to 6.25 per cent pushed rates down to their lowest for more than a year, but failed to trigger further cuts in mortgage rates.

The stock market leapt on the news, with the FTSE index of 100 top companies jumping by 44.5 points to a record high of 3,748.7. The City is now betting on a further quarter point cut by March.

Footsie record, page 20

summer with leaders of the 1922 committee) that the constituency party membership - who have expressed solid support for Mr Major in the most recent soundings taken during the party's consultation exercise - should have formal say.

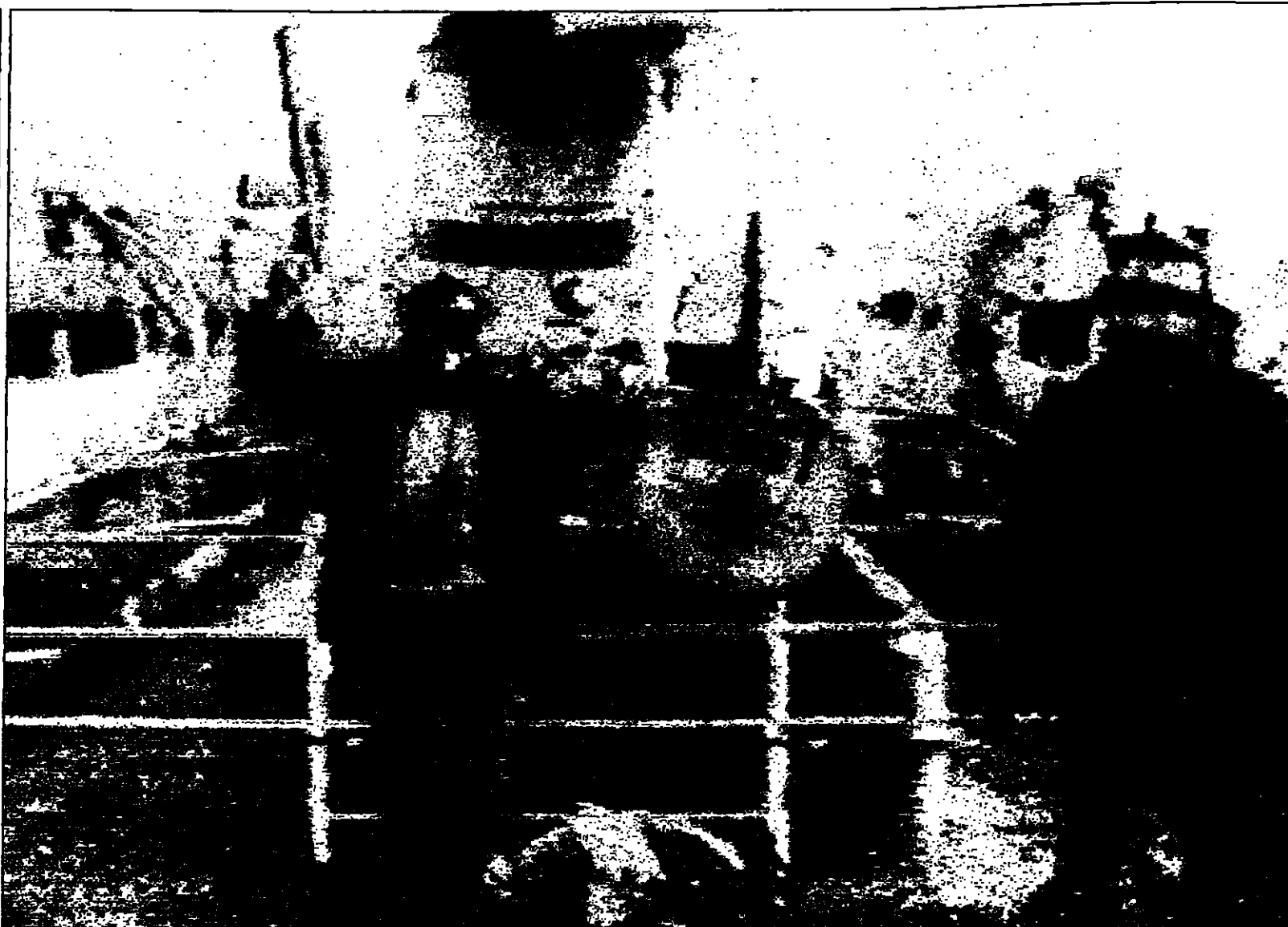
But one senior backbench figure on the right of the party said that MPs would resist any attempt to dilute their exclusive rights to pick the party leader and added: "That's why we are resisting a wide-ranging review of the rules which could open that whole issue up."

But amid a warm welcome for the one-quarter of a per cent fall in interest rates - and among the right at least for the White Paper announcement - a series of senior party figures queued up to dismiss suggestions that Mr Major would be forced out in the wake of the elections - much less walk out voluntarily having successfully gambled his leadership last summer.

The promised White Paper, Whitehall sources emphasised, would not lay out the final negotiating position of Mr Major's government during the IGC, which opens in Turin in March, though it will rehearse positions already made public - such as the government's outright opposition to any extension of qualified majority voting in the EU.

A Foreign Office statement said: "While the White Paper cannot be a detailed negotiating document, it will draw together the various policy statements that have been made by the Government and will indicate the Government's general objectives."

It nevertheless raises the possibility of another difficult Commons vote if Labour seeks to amend the normal take note motion when the White Paper is published. Several left-of-centre MPs wrote privately to Mr Major over the last few weeks strongly urging him not to have a White Paper.



Sailing into trouble: Chechen-supporting gunmen aboard the hijacked Russian ferry yesterday

Photograph: Globetrotter

# Yeltsin warns of Chechen war

PHIL REEVES  
Pervomayskoye  
HUGH POPE  
Istanbul

After pulverising the village of Pervomayskoye, and the Chechen rebels and their hostages holed up there, for four days Boris Yeltsin last night threatened a new assault against the Chechen leader, Dzhokhar Dudayev.

The end of the assault on the village left large questions unanswered - over the death toll, the conduct of the Russian forces, and over the fate of 200 people still held hostage by Chechen sympathisers on a ship in the Black Sea.

Mr Yeltsin said he would now take the initiative against Mr Dudayev, apparently threatening a resumption of the bloody civil war which cost both sides heavily last year.

"We have taught Dudayev a sound lesson and we now need



to strike at all the Dudayev strongholds where there are no civilians in order to do away with terrorism on Russian soil," he said.

Mr Yeltsin stunned independent observers by claiming that 82 of the Chechens hostages had emerged safely -

a figure that seemed astonishingly high given the intensity of the Russian bombardment.

It also directly contradicts claims by senior military officials earlier this week that most of the hostages had been murdered by the kidnappers.

Mr Yeltsin's version of events has already been challenged in Russia, despite stringent efforts to prevent reporters gaining access to the battle.

A report in *Izvestia* newspaper said yesterday that the attack had been reckless and disorganised. "To call this an operation to save hostages is, to say the least, cynical," wrote *Izvestia's* correspondent, Valery Yakov, who spent three days near the battle zone.

The Russian interior ministry said the bodies of 153 Chechen rebels had been found in the village, and that 28 rebels had also been captured - though their leader, Salman Raduyev, may have escaped, Mr Yeltsin, said

that 26 Russian servicemen had also died.

The other Chechen drama was still unresolved last night, with a hijacked ferry carrying 200 hostages nearing Istanbul.

The *Avuzya* ferry, which was seized by supporters of Chechen rebels fighting for independence from Russia, was about 120 miles east of the city last night, but the Turkish government has refused to allow the gunmen into the Bosphorus.

The ferry, laden with explosives, could reach the city early today. The gunmen have threatened to blow up the ship unless Russian forces halt attacks on Chechen rebels.

Film from on board the ship

showed the hijackers looking tired and nervous but determined.

They were dressed like pirates in baggy coats and woolly balaclava hats, with grenades on their jackets, pistols and knives in their belts and all kinds of weapons in their hands, including rifles and big pump-action shotguns.

"Allah-u-akbar!" (God is Great) they repeatedly cheered as the camera panned out to show a Turkish frigate shadowing them and flags from the Caucasus run up the mast, including the green-and-white striped banner of the Chechen independence movement.

Guns fall silent, page 12

# DTI called in after 'insider deals' probe

DAVID HELLIER

The London Stock Exchange last night announced that it had passed the findings of an investigation into dealings in the shares of Caradon, the building products group, to the Department of Trade and Industry.

A four-line statement from the Exchange, whose chairman is John Kemp-Welch, said that it had concluded an investigation into dealings in the shares of Caradon ahead of an announcement by the company on 11 September last year relating to its interim results. News of the Stock Exchange investigation was first revealed earlier this month in the *Independent*.

The last time the Exchange made a public announcement that it was investigating allegations of improper share-dealing was in August 1994 when it confirmed that it had passed on information to the DTI about share dealings in Anglia television ahead of a takeover bid.

The decision was taken after new information on the dealings came to light in the past couple of weeks. It comes as two analysts at Robert Fleming, the investment bank, who have been at the centre of questioning, have quit their posts. Derek Reed and Martin Murch were said to be no longer employees of the company yesterday, although they are believed to

have been offered consultancy work by the bank. The DTI will decide whether to appoint inspectors to investigate the case.

The Exchange investigations team has been trying to ascertain whether anyone at Robert Fleming received, and made improper use of, privileged information. Heavy trading on the Friday before the results were due first attracted the attention of the regulators. Caradon was the market's most heavily traded stock, with 26 million shares changing hands at about 210p each in the late afternoon.

The likelihood that there had been a leak was strengthened when reports that Caradon would unveil dis-

appointing figures appeared in two Sunday newspapers. Caradon brought forward its results and issued a profits warning on the Monday, leading some brokers to downgrade their forecasts.

The Exchange has been considering suggestions of a relationship between Robert Fleming and Financial Dynamics, Caradon's public relations firm and one of the largest in the City. Financial Dynamics' chairman Tony Knox is known to be friends with the two former Robert Fleming analysts. Mr Knox has declined to make any comment on the affair although friends of Mr Knox have said that there is no question of him having passed them

any inside information. Mr Knox could not be contacted yesterday for comment.

Yesterday Nick Miles, the chief executive of Financial Dynamics, said he welcomed the official announcement of the inquiry.

"This will give us the chance to clear our name and get on with our business."

Mr Miles said his firm had twice contacted the exchange to ask if it could be of any assistance to its investigation. "They told us that they had no need to see us," he said.

Mr Miles added that there was no question of anybody at his firm passing on inside information about Caradon.



John Kemp-Welch: London Stock Exchange chairman

## IN BRIEF

**Meningitis breakthrough**  
Doctors in Glasgow have made an important breakthrough in treating the most severe form of meningitis which can kill in just a few hours. Page 3

**Howard in chains U-turn**  
Michael Howard was yesterday forced into an embarrassing U-turn over the shackling of pregnant women prisoners in hospital. Page 2

**Today's weather**  
Grey and misty but generally dry. Section Two, page 33

# Anti-porn device nets a £30m fortune

RUSSELL HOTTEN

Three Britons whose company developed computer software to prevent children downloading pornography or other undesirable material from the Internet became multi-millionaires yesterday when they sold their invention to the US.

Entrepreneur John Kimberley, 48, marketing specialist Peter Simpkin, 44, and Richard Whitehead, 48, a programming expert, have been paid £30m by an American computer com-

pany - realising a phenomenal return on their original investment of £600,000.

The software package that they developed puts restrictions on use of the Internet and can be used equally by companies, schools, or individuals.

The story of their company - Firefox, based in Solihull, near Birmingham - is one of several get-rich-quick tales about the Internet. UK companies are flocking to the US where hi-tech firms are the latest glamour stock, with financiers willing to

invest millions in operations with no track record.

"Things are moving so fast in America," said Mr Kimberley. "Bankers really understand the market, and are willing to take on young companies. Not like in the UK, where the City only takes notice after you have been around for 10 years, or so."

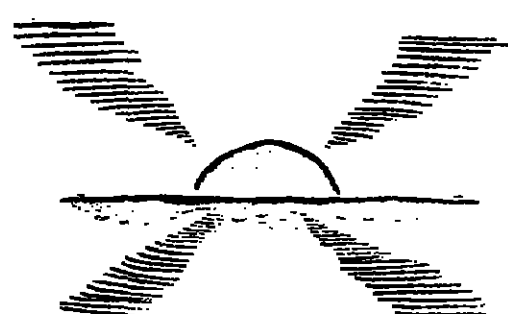
Firefox, which employs 100 people, was floated on the Nasdaq exchange in May with a value of \$100m (£66m). It raised \$20m for the original backers, with Mr Kimberley getting \$3m.

Shares were priced at \$18, twice initial expectations, but shot to \$30 in furious trading. Mr Kimberley still owned 23 per cent of the company after the flotation, and the deal announced yesterday with California-based FTP Software converted that into about £15m. All three founders take up senior posts at FTP.

Firefox is not the first hi-tech company to hit the big time on the US stock market, but it is still a long way off the heights achieved by the US company Net-scape. Floated last August

at \$28 a share, Net-scape's price reached \$75 on the first day, before closing at \$58. Just 15 months old and not making a profit, the company was suddenly worth \$1.07bn, about 40 times its annual turnover. The chairman's holding alone was worth \$670m.

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# Howard unchains pregnant prisoners

HEATHER MILLS  
Home Affairs Correspondent

The Home Secretary, Michael Howard, was yesterday forced into an embarrassing U-turn over the shackling of pregnant women prisoners in hospital – but he refused to apologise to those who have been chained in the past.

Only days after ministers were publicly defending the controversial policy, Mr Howard announced that no pregnant women should be held in chains once she enters

a maternity unit – whether for an ante-natal check or in labour.

Prisoners attending hospitals for other reasons would “generally” continue to be restrained, he said, unless the governor decides they are unnecessary following a thorough risk assessment.

The retreat followed a sustained barrage of criticism from health, maternity and human rights groups over the “degrading and inhuman” use of chains on pregnant and ill women – and an apology to the

Commons by the Prisons Minister, Ann Widdecombe, for misleading MPs over the issue.

Labour seized on the Government's discomfort saying the chaining of women was symbolic of its “arrogance and inhumanity”. Jack Straw, shadow Home Secretary, told Mr Howard: “You have been driven to this humiliating retreat not by decency or by compassion, but by panic at the avalanche of bad publicity.”

“A wider apology is now required from you, yourself for the brutal and unnecessary humil-

iation which your policy has forced on a number of pregnant prisoners.”

Mr Howard insisted, however, that it was an “operational matter”. The Prison Service had a responsibility to balance the need to hold prisoners securely with the duty to treat them with humanity and to maintain their dignity and privacy. “The modifications I have announced will, I believe, allow the Prison Service to strike a reasonable balance on behalf of the public,” he said.

At a news conference fol-

lowing Mr Howard's announcement, the acting director-general of the Prison Service, Richard Tilt, said he had been unhappy with existing policies. Mr Tilt said: “It does not concern me if anyone thinks this is a climbdown. That is a secondary matter.”

He said the policy had always been that women in labour should not be handcuffed but that it was difficult to define the onset of labour.

“We were putting our staff in a very difficult position and our own policy was proving unsat-

isfactory in its result.” He said the aims of safety and treating pregnant prisoners humanely were incompatible. “What we've done is to shift more towards the humane aspect.”

However, it became clear that the climbdown would not satisfy Mr Howard's critics who maintain the use of chains breaches human rights conventions and United Nations agreements, which state that “chains and irons” should not be used as restraints. At least two women who have been shackled during labour, are

pursuing legal actions against Mr Howard and a third woman, ill with the HIV virus and chained for nine days, is also considering suing.

Yesterday a joint statement from a variety of maternity, health and women groups, including the National Childbirth Trust, made it clear that they wanted a complete ban on the use of chains.

“We totally reject shackling of women prisoners. Shackling is degrading and potentially damaging to the health of mothers and babies.”

## IN BRIEF

### Second Maxwell juror taken ill

A second member of the Maxwell trial jury was taken ill yesterday, forcing the judge to adjourn the trial of Kevin and Ian Maxwell and former Maxwell company director Larry Trachtenberg on charges of conspiring to defraud pension funds for the third day running.

The delay means the seven men and five women last night spent their 11th night in a hotel, one of the longest recorded retirement periods for an English jury. Legal experts believe the record for actually deliberating a verdict is 56 hours 37 minutes for a rape murder trial in April 1982, when the jury were sequestered for eight nights.

The Maxwell jury had already spent 47 hours considering 121 days of evidence and summing up when Judge Nicholas Phillips adjourned the trial early on Tuesday after a female juror complained of a chest infection.

### Arms report

John Major and George Mitchell, the former US senator who is heading the international commission on arms decommissioning by Northern Ireland paramilitaries, met at Downing Street for what a spokesman called a “stocktaking” exercise. The three-man body will finalise its report for publication next Wednesday in London, Dublin and Belfast.

### NHS undermined

Cutbacks in the National Health Service which prompt people to buy private health insurance are eroding support for the NHS and the concept of universal care, a report published by the Institute of Fiscal Studies says. It says the privately insured tend to be better-off, better educated, middle-aged, and more inclined to support the Tories. They do not favour increased spending on the NHS.

### Threat to Royal titles

Wayward Royals should be stripped of their titles, Sir David Steel, former Liberal leader and a member of the Privy Council, said as the Duchess of York left for a charity event in the United States trailing criticism about debts of up to £3m. There is growing concern at Westminster over the behaviour of members of the Royal Family undermining support for the monarchy. Sir David hinted that the Princess of Wales could lose her title as part of a divorce settlement from the Prince of Wales widely expected to be announced shortly.

### Over-fast footwork

MPs and motoring organisations condemned a decision by magistrates in Telford not to disqualify footballer Chris Armstrong for speeding. Armstrong, 24, striker for Tottenham Hot Spurs and an English squad player, was clocked at 104mph on the M54 in Shropshire after the north London team played at Chester last October. He was fined £500 and given six penalty points.

### Cruelty ban

A former farm worker was fined £250 banned from working with cattle for five years for wilfully and unnecessarily causing unnecessary suffering to 98 cows at a farm near York. Magistrates in Easingwold, North Yorkshire, were told Michael Chitlock, 47, broke the cows' tails when he lost his temper and bent them into a U-shape to force the animals into milking stalls.

## Acne drug blamed for two deaths

GLENDIA COOPER

The most widely prescribed acne treatment has caused two people to die and another to have a liver transplant, according to a report in the *British Medical Journal*.

There is increasing evidence that Minocycline, an antibiotic, can cause a form of drug-induced liver disease, hepatitis, or lupus, a disabling autoimmune disease.

Minocycline, sold as Minocin MR, is one of the most widely prescribed antibiotics for acne largely because it needs to be given only once or twice a day and seems not to induce resistance. In 1993 there were more than 800,000 prescriptions of the drug at a cost of £23.3m.

But up to April 1994, 11 cases of minocycline-induced lupus and 16 cases of hepatitis had been reported to the Committee on the Safety of Medicines, according to a paper by Andrew Gough, consultant registrar at Harrogate District Hospital's department of rheumatology. Most cases described were women. Analysis of these cases and seven others show the severity of the reactions.

A 17-year-old girl developed fatal liver disease, skin infections and fever after a one-month course of minocycline, despite being given a liver transplant. And a 22-year-old woman died after taking the antibiotic for five months as a result of pancytopenia (reduction in blood cells across the body).

Others found themselves chairbound or initially unable to hold a cup, and another two suffered from jaundice. Other adverse effects of the drug include blue-black excessive pigmentation of the skin, mucus membranes, nails, adult teeth and internal organs. But those who stopped taking the drug recovered within three months, although five people who started taking the drug again found their symptoms reoccurring.

In an accompanying leading article, the *BMJ* said that “serious reactions are rare” to minocycline but recommends that its “unusual propensity” for causing such reactions “may make it less safe than other tetracyclines and this should be taken into account when treating essentially benign conditions such as acne”.



John Evans from Northampton driving his team of huskies on the banks of Loch Morlich near Aviemore in the Highlands yesterday. He was taking part in a practice run for the 14th Spillers Winalot/Siberian Husky Club Rally to be held over the weekend. Photograph: Chris Bacon/Press Association

## Dorrell offers to ease heavy workload of family doctors

NICHOLAS TIMMINS  
Public Policy Editor

A radically revamped role for family doctors, providing more of the care traditionally provided in hospitals while nurses and others take on more of the routine work in GPs' surgeries, was offered to general practitioners yesterday by Stephen Dorrell, the Secretary of State for Health.

What amounts to a new vision of general practice and which will almost certainly involve a new contract for GPs was outlined by Mr Dorrell in his first formal meeting with the British Medical Association's family doctors committee.

With both medicine changing fast and new purchasing arrangements breaking down traditional barriers between hospital and GP services, Mr

Dorrell said before the meeting that there was “a huge opportunity to improve the quality of service to patients and make work more rewarding for staff in the medical profession”.

He had, he stressed, an “open agenda” to which family doctors themselves were welcome to contribute. But he cited GPs becoming more involved in providing minor accident and emergency services outside hospital, in mental health services, in providing post-operative care in community hospitals or “hospital-at-home” schemes, and in providing on-going treatment not just for asthma or diabetes but other conditions, working under protocols designed by consultants.

In turn, nurses in general practice could probably prescribe for more conditions, op-

erating within protocols designed by GPs. “These developments will have both resource implications and implications for who does what in primary care,” he said.

He stressed that if GPs were being asked to do more, in some areas they would have to do less. Attempting to assuage GPs' fears that he is merely adding to a workload which they already see as excessive, he promised “reasonable rewards” for “reasonable workload”, adding: “I do not think GPs have anything to fear from this. Absolutely the contrary.”

It should, he said, provide a more rewarding job, freeing GPs to provide more time for the more difficult cases.

Following the meeting, a spokesman for the BMA said the committee “was impressed by Mr Dorrell's constructive ap-

proach to general practice”, while expressing scepticism that the resources would be made available to allow the change.

With GP leaders agitating for a new contract to replace the much-resented one that Kenneth Clarke, when Secretary of State for Health, imposed on them in 1988, Mr Dorrell said he hoped to agree a set of objectives by early summer.

Detailed talks could then begin – a timetable that could see a Labour government having to settle the final package.

Although ideas for the new service are initially being explored with GPs, Mr Dorrell acknowledged the implications for nurses and others. “It is important to know how different professions react to the ideas. We want to hear what they say and get a clearer idea of where the emphasis should be.”

## One year is too short for divorce says Cardinal

ANDREW BROWN and STEPHEN WARD

Cardinal Basil Hume, leader of the Roman Catholic Church in England, is to support opponents of Lord Mackay's controversial divorce Bill by suggesting that a year is too short a time to wait before dissolving a marriage.

His intervention midway through debates on a multitude of highly critical amendments in the House of Lords will come as a blow to the Lord Chancellor, who had believed that the Catholic bishops of England and Wales were solidly on his side. The Bill would put an end to “quickie” divorces; end the concept of fault; and introduce mediation where possible to replace lawyers. Opponents in the Lords want a minimum period of 18 months or two years.

In an article in today's *Tablet*, the Catholic news magazine, the Cardinal says: “I do myself wonder whether a period as short as a year is sufficient to establish that a marriage has irrevocably broken down.”

He adds that marriage counselling is an “essential” element which needs to be added to the Bill as it stands.

Lengthening the year's waiting period is the one area where the Lord Chancellor might make a concession to the Bill's opponents in a bid to persuade them to tone down their objections to other provisions.

The mainstream churches in this country had all given their support to the Bill as the least worst way of dealing with the issue. The growing campaign mounted by political and religious conservatives has, however, put the Cardinal under pressure in recent months.

Today's article is an attempt to accommodate critics of the compromise, without threatening the essence of the Bill. One source in the Catholic church described it as “walking a tightrope”.

In his article, the Cardinal carefully does not take issue with the abolition of the concept of fault, which has been the central issue for many opponents of the Bill.

He quotes the measured statement of the Catholic Bishops' Conference in November: “We are not persuaded that excluding ‘fault’ in the proposed legislation effectively alters the reality that divorce has become available on demand.”

“In civil law, marriage is already a temporary contract which can be broken by the unilateral decision of one partner sustained over a period of time.”

“The Church's teaching is that a valid marriage contract cannot be broken. From a legal point of view, it is difficult to see what more objective proof of marital breakdown there could be than the sustained determination of one or both partners to end it.”

## Major ‘has created a two-nation Britain’

John Major has failed to deliver the classless society he promised, creating instead a “two nation” Britain, Tony Blair declared last night to a packed public meeting, writes Patricia Wynn Davies.

Taking the “stakeholder economy” argument into the enemy camp, the Labour leader said that in attacking the concept, the Tories had given up any pretence of serving the whole country. “Why has the man

who promised a classless society set his face against plans that will make a reality of that classless society?” Mr Blair demanded at a thousand-strong meeting in Derby.

Invoking the “tell Sid” slogan of the British Gas sell-off, he said: “It's not Sid the Tories look after. It's Cedric. And wasn't it telling that the first person to defend the Prime Minister's attack on the stakeholder economy was Cedric Brown?”

## Scientists admit error on first Aids case



Mystery death: David Carr pictured as a boy

LIZ HUNT  
Health Editor

Claims that the world's first Aids case was a sailor from Manchester who died in 1959 were wrong, two of the scientists who did the original research have admitted.

The scientists say the mistake arose because tissue samples from the patient probably became contaminated with a modern strain of HIV. Doubts over the validity of the claim were first revealed in the *Independent* last year.

Subsequent tests show that David Carr, a 25-year-old who died of a mysterious illness in

Manchester Royal Infirmary, was not infected with the virus.

In a letter published in tomorrow's issue of *The Lancet*, two of the scientists, Andrew Bailey and Gerald Corbett admit “... we can find no evidence ... to suggest that the 1959 Manchester patient carried [HIV].”

It was another letter signed by Dr George Williams, a pathologist at Manchester University, Mr Corbett and Mr Bailey, published in *The Lancet* in 1990 which brought worldwide attention and acclaim. It challenged the accepted view that Aids, reported first in 1981, was a newly-emerging disease.

Dr Williams, who had carried out the post-mortem on Mr Carr in 1959, retrieved samples of Mr Carr's tissue which had been in storage for more than 30 years, for detailed analysis by colleagues at the University. Dr Williams had remembered the case because it was so unusual; Mr Carr had suffered from infections common in Aids patients.

In 1994, however, leading American Aids scientists questioned the validity of the research carried out by the team. They had studied the genetic make-up of the Carr virus and were astonished to find that it was identical to HIV strains cir-

culating in the 1980s. HIV mutates very rapidly and experts expected the Carr virus to be very different from modern strains.

The American team performed more tests and later suggested that tissue samples from Carr used in the original research may have been mixed up with those of another man who died in the 1980s. This has always been strenuously denied by the Manchester scientists.

In their most recent *Lancet* letter, Mr Bailey and Mr Corbett said that experiments by an independent team which would have settled this matter were inconclusive.



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# Doctors' hunch brings meningitis hope

JOHN ARLIDGE  
Scotland Correspondent

Doctors in Glasgow have made an important breakthrough in treating the most severe form of meningitis which can kill a patient in just a few hours.

Paediatricians at Yorkhill NHS Trust, Britain's second largest children's hospital, say that experimental treatment carried out on four patients who contracted meningococcal septicaemia shows that early dialysis - blood cleansing - can help to kill the infection. They are urging other doctors to try the method to treat this comparatively rare form of the disease.

The four children - three girls and a boy aged between two and 12 - were close to death when they were admitted to the intensive care unit at Yorkhill last year. Doctors, alarmed by the speed at which the meningococcal infection had spread through their bodies, decided to administer dialysis immediately rather than waiting for signs of kidney failure.

Despite this early treatment, consultants expected at least three of the four to die within days. They were astonished when one by one the children began to recover. Although three had limbs and toes amputated when the poisoned blood in their legs clotted, all four have now been discharged and are back at home.

The development came too late to save 17-year-old Alison Krumic, who died of meningococcal septicaemia in London on Tuesday. Yesterday her parents said they will sue the hospital which allegedly failed to recognise their daughter's symptoms. Ms Krumic died at Ealing Hospital, west London,

after a doctor allegedly said she was suffering from a bad cold and gave her a painkilling injection.

Ms Krumic's parents took her home by car despite her being unable to walk and being violently sick. Within 90 minutes, she was unconscious and fighting for her life. The family called for an ambulance but one-and-a-half hours later she was dead.

The Scottish paediatric intensive-care team, led by Dr Crispin Best, was aware that dialysis helped patients in the later stages of the disease. "We wanted to see what would happen if we tried it sooner," Dr Best said yesterday. "We had a hunch it might work."

Dr Best said he was surprised at the success of the treatment. "This form of meningitis is the bacterial equivalent of being run over by a speeding truck. It is a vile, deadly disease and there was great relief when the children's conditions began to improve." It was too early to claim that the discovery would lead to a cure, Dr Best said, but "our clinical impression is that the early use of [dialysis] is potentially life-saving."

Doctors and researchers at the hospital, who publish their findings in today's edition of *The Lancet*, admit they do not know how the dialysis treatment works - only that it does. One theory is that filtering a patient's blood removes the toxins produced by the infection making it easier for the body's immune system to recover and kill the infection itself.

Dr Best and his colleagues are calling on doctors around Britain to "try out" the technique as part of a nationwide survey to determine its effectiveness. Medical staff at the County Hospital in Lincoln have already begun to use the methods pioneered in Glasgow. "We are confident we are on to something but we need more information - a structured trial - before we can be sure."

At Yorkhill yesterday Ellen Curran, the mother of three-year-old Jonathan who underwent the pioneering treatment, praised the doctors' decision to opt for early dialysis. "Jonathan was given just six hours to live when he was admitted."

"There is no doubt in my mind that this treatment saved my son's life. He is back to his old self again - bright, cheeky and as far as I am concerned quite brilliant."



'Quite brilliant': Ellen Curran hugs her son Jonathan, 3, who was given six hours to live before the dialysis treatment. Photograph: Drew Farrell

## The simple facts on a deadly virus

LIZ HUNT  
Health Editor

What is meningitis?

The word meningitis means inflammation of the meninges, the delicate membranes that cover the brain and spinal cord. It is caused by a viral infection, usually mild, or a bacterial (meningococcal) infection which can be life-threatening.

A bacterium which lives harmlessly in the nose and throat of about 10 to 25 per cent of the population is responsible for most cases of meningococcal meningitis. Doctors do not know why the microbes move from the nose/throat to

cause a systemic infection in carriers, or why non-carriers should become vulnerable.

Have there been more cases this winter than in previous winters?

Not according to the Public Health Laboratory Service which monitors reports of bacterial meningitis. However, cases may have peaked earlier than normal. A number of clusters of cases in the pre-Christmas period, heightened perception of a meningitis epidemic. GPs are also much more aware of meningitis now and inclined to refer suspected cases to hospital as a precaution.

Some of these will not be due to meningitis. Provisional figures for 1995 show there were 1361 cases of meningococcal disease and 185 deaths. In 1994, there were 1129 cases reported and 148 deaths (provisional).

What treatments are available for meningitis?

Treatment for meningococcal meningitis is the prompt administration of large doses of intravenous antibiotic drugs. Antibiotics may also be prescribed to contacts of a meningitis victim although there is no guarantee of protection.

Vaccine development is problematic but some progress has

been made. A vaccine against the bacterium *hamophilus influenzae b*, has controlled one type of bacterial meningitis and it is now included in the NHS immunisation programme. Researchers are close to developing a vaccine for meningococcal strain C. An experimental C vaccine is available and has been used this year.

How is the infection transmitted?

In droplets produced in coughs and sneezes, and by nose-blowing.

How infectious is it?

Not very infectious, which is why

on average only 2,000 people out of the total UK population contract the disease each year.

What are the symptoms?

The classic symptoms of bacterial meningitis are fever, a severe headache, nausea, vomiting, a dislike of light and a stiff neck. The symptoms develop rapidly, in many cases within a few hours, and are followed by drowsiness and there may be loss of consciousness. A red rash which spreads very quickly and is due to leaking capillaries appears in about half of all cases.

□ The National Meningitis Trust Helpline is 0345 538118.



Alison Krumic: Parents to sue over her death

## Super-skilled male secretary loses agency sex bias claim

A highly skilled male typist yesterday lost his fight to prove a secretarial agency would not find him a job because he was a man.

Alan Robinson, 30, claimed the national agency Office Angels sexually discriminated against him by failing to contact him after an interview at its Leeds office, despite a shortage of qualified typists in the city.

Mr Robinson, whose application was supported by the Equal Opportunities Commission, also claimed he was refused a typing test at the interview because he was a man.

Office Angels staff told the Leeds tribunal that it was standard procedure not to give ap-

plicants for a permanent post a typing test. And they insisted that Mr Robinson was sent three letters after his interview in July last year - one of them a standard introductory letter, and two about a job at Midland Bank. Mr Robinson, of Reinwood Road, Huddersfield, said he did not receive the letters.

The tribunal's chairman, Leslie Gould, told the hearing that the application was dismissed because Office Angels had given a "satisfactory explanation of what occurred". He added: "Due to the differences between what he said in his original application and the evidence we have heard, we have inferred that his recollection to-

day is not accurate." Discrepancies included whether Mr Robinson said he was also available for temporary work, and whether he actually demanded a typing test or just asked if he was going to be given one.

Mr Robinson claimed that on the afternoon of his interview three women were given typing tests. But the barrister for Office Angels, Thomas Linden, said the women were applying for temporary jobs and it was procedure to give them a test. Another male test was interviewed and tested on the day and was eventually offered a post by the agency.

Mr Robinson, unemployed, had RSA typing qualifications

including a distinction in one exam. However, he failed to include the qualifications on his Office Angels application form.

Mr Linden said: "It's quite extraordinary that Mr Robinson did not say that he had outstanding qualifications." But Mr Robinson's solicitor Martin Brewer said: "The reason he wasn't offered any job was because he was a man and he did not fit in with their stereotype view of what a secretary ought to have been."

After the verdict Mr Robinson said: "Obviously I feel disappointed but having said that, I feel it's brought the issue of equality for male typists to the forefront. I have achieved that."

## Sting in call to legalise ecstasy

STEVE BOGGAN

Sting, the pop star and sometime environmentalist, was at the centre of a row yesterday after calling for the dance drug ecstasy to be legalised.

Sting, 44, who admitted taking ecstasy, was speaking in an interview in London with a Swedish newspaper. Asked whether ecstasy should be legalised, he said: "Absolutely, yes. Then we can make sure what we take is safe and that it is ecstasy. If we leave it to the criminals, they can put anything they want into the pill."

"In England, millions of ecstasy pills are consumed every week. Three or four have died in God knows how many years. Teenagers notice the statistics. They are prepared to take the risks." He said he had taken the drug and found it "interesting". Sting also said: "I have every sympathy for the Berts family and their position and it's a tragedy that she died. But Leah Berts was killed by water - she drank too much or too little - and that's an educational issue." Janet Berts, the mother of Leah, who died after taking an ecstasy pill at her 18th birthday



Sting: Drug is 'interesting'

party, said: "Leah didn't die from excess liquid. The cause of death on the certificate says ecstasy poisoning."

Dr Marcus Rattray, lecturer in biochemistry at Guy's Hospital, London, said the pop star's call for testing was pointless. "Research has shown that the adulteration of drugs has not been a factor in any of the deaths."

Keith Hellawell, Chief Constable of West Yorkshire, said: "Sting seems to be under the misapprehension that ecstasy is an adulterated form is safe. This is clearly not the case."

## Ports alert for crash driver

Channel ports were alerted to look out for a lorry driver last night as police investigated the death of a teenage cyclist in Kent.

Fifteen-year-old Amy Durling, from Greenhill, near Herne Bay in Kent, was on her paper-round when the incident occurred, at about 7.30am yesterday, on the London-bound carriageway of the busy A299 Thanet Way at Greenhill.

The driver stopped to remove the bicycle wreckage from his vehicle before driving off. Kent Police officers, trying to trace the driver of what witnesses said was a foreign-registered lorry, gave its description to port officials at Ramsgate and Dover.

One theory is that the lorry, travelling in convoy with another, may have arrived on an early morning ferry from the Continent.

A police spokeswoman said: "We have been in contact with the ports and also local transport companies and given them a description of the vehicle we are looking for. So far we have not been able to trace the lorry or the driver."

"Tomorrow we will be issuing

leaflets to freight drivers at Ramsgate and Dover and we will also be stopping drivers at a check point at the accident scene at the same time."

The two vehicles are described as having yellow tractor units and blue trailers with blue canvas tops with either yellow or white writing on them.

Amy, a pupil at Herne Bay High School, had completed her mock-GCSE exams last week and had ambitions of becoming a nurse. Her body was identified by her parents.

Danny O'Donovan, head teacher at Herne Bay High School, where she was a prefect, said his pupils and staff were in shock. "I have called in educational psychologists and counsellors to help me break the news to the school and they will be on hand over the next few days. We will especially be keeping a close eye on those who were close to Amy."

Mr O'Donovan said Amy "was a credit in every way. She was one of those girls for whom nothing was too much trouble and she was always willing to help with school events."

Police have urged witnesses to call 01227 817145.

## INQUIRY INTO LEGISLATION AGAINST TERRORISM.

The Government has announced that it is setting up an independent inquiry to look into the future need for counter terrorism legislation once peace has become established in Northern Ireland.

The Inquiry will consider what legislation will be needed to deal with the longer term threat from all kinds of terrorism.

The Inquiry is to be carried out by the Rt. Hon. Lord Lloyd of Berwick. He will be assisted by Sir Brian Kerr, a Northern Ireland High Court Judge, who will advise on Northern Ireland matters. Lord Lloyd will be consulting widely and he would like to receive comments and contributions from the public.

If you have any views relating to the law against terrorism which you would like Lord Lloyd to consider, please write to him at PO Box 9998, London SW1H 9ZB.

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SUNDAY TIMES

## THE OBSERVER

## INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY



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**JOJO MOYES**

**come from a dead woman who had cancer**

Mr Sumner, from Haywards Heath, West Sussex, had suf-

But after the consultant, who is now dead, chose not to tell Mr Sumner of the cancer risk or remove the organ, the cancer spread and he was left with little chance of survival.

After believing for months that he was dying, Mr Sumner, against all expectations, went into remission. But Mr Parroy said the effect of the combination of dialysis and radiotherapy

Mr Sumner remained on dialysis and under observation until June 1990 when he underwent a second transplant. He is now claiming substantial damages from the hospital's

He described Mr Sumner as a "stoical" man who had borne

fortitude, but he had been "psychologically scarred".

Mr Sumner said afterwards: "After 10 years, obviously I'm very relieved." Mr Justice Collins is expected to assess the amount of damages due to him next week.

A spokeswoman for Brighton Health Care NHS Trust said "a great deal had changed" since the case.

Photograph: David Crump

Amid the mud and trees of Berkshire yesterday the middle classes stood shoulder-to-shoulder with protesters in the campaign to block work on the Newbury bypass.

As hardened environmental activists hung from trees to prevent clearance work, a very different group of people stood below, among them Lady Barber, disgruntled Tory voter and wife of the baronet, Sir David Barber.

She has been campaigning against the road for the last eighteen months. "I'm a Conservative voter and I'm in a bit of a dilemma at the moment," she said. Lady Barber is the chairwoman of the Tory party association in the nearby village of Inkpen and is implacably opposed to the road.

"I know I'm behaving like one of Arthur Scargill's miners but I've never done anything like this before," she said.

A keen hunter, Lady Barber, would normally find herself confronting many of the activists but now she finds herself on the same side. Their radicalism has even begun to rub off on her.

"I'm now a bit more radical and its dominating my life at the moment. There's a dichotomy in my life. Should I carry on campaigning or come back and be a housewife? It's a question I cannot answer," she said.

Jo Carter, a former Tory voter who was also out with the

protesters, says she has lost faith in the political system.

**"You do not have the ability to challenge the decisions of the Secretary of State and anybody who wishes to uphold this democratic system must be aware of that."**

"We are low in confidence in the procedures but gaining conviction that we should do something about it. Constitutionally we've done as much as we can and this is the sort of thing that leads to more action groups. "As far as direct action is con-

cerned a lot of people like myself identify with the people involved. We have children and grandchildren at university with the same philosophy as the activists," she said.

Ms Carter, 49, who runs an electronics company and a small farm, has taken to giving the protesters food, money and also moral support.

Also adding support was Peter Yarrow, owner of a local newsagents chain, and his wife Tessa, who live on the town's outskirts.

Mr Yarrow said the road was not supported by the whole town as many felt it would lead to Newbury becoming "as big as Basingstoke" and would attract social problems such as unemployment.

The protesters were quick to welcome their unlikely allies.

Tony Hooligan, one of the protest co-ordinators, said: "Nobody asks your political views, we've all got the same

aim. It's pointless to put people into categories, most people are individuals. Everybody is just concerned about what's happening."

On Day 10 since construction of the road began, the battle had moved to Pen Wood, south west of the Berkshire town, where contractors attempted to continue tree-cutting.

Three people were arrested as about 60 protesters were outmanoeuvred by some 200 police and security guards allowing workers to cut down about 70 silver birches.

Meanwhile, the chief executives of the environmental establishment, including the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the Wildlife Trusts and the Council for British Archaeology, joined forces with Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth yesterday to support the activists opposing the road.

The growing opposition to the road has also begun to worry the construction companies currently tendering to build the road. Only the route clearance contract has been awarded with the main contract to be awarded in six weeks.

Road construction costs have increased by 30 per cent in the last year and they are concerned that this may force the Government to scrap the project. The spiralling security costs plus the escalating "risk premium" may also encourage the Government to cancel the road.



Photograph: Phil Tul

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## news

# Swiss pupils years ahead of English in maths

WENDY BERLINER  
Education Correspondent

English children at the end of primary school are up to two years behind their Swiss counterparts in maths even though they have been in school for about 18 months less, according to research published today.

Swiss children spend more time on arithmetic, particularly mental arithmetic, and more time practising what they learn, the paper from the National Institute of Economic and Social Research says.

English children spend more time working alone and have to tackle more difficult mathematical concepts before they are confident in the simpler ones.

The study looked at how eight- and nine-year-olds were taught maths in England, Switzerland and Germany, where maths teaching has been intensively researched.

On the Continent two-thirds of the lesson would be given to the whole class, with children expected to answer lots of questions and write answers on the blackboard or an overhead projector. In contrast, English schools relied mainly on individual work books with children getting a minute or two from the teacher as he or she moved around the class to attend to children individually.

Four-fifths of the time was spent on arithmetic on the Continent, whereas in England the national curriculum specified numbers as only one of four maths attainment targets.

Swiss and German children spend longer on each maths topic before moving on to the next. Typical continental textbooks have six times as many exercises per topic as English textbooks. Progression of topics is also more carefully graded than in English textbooks where more difficult concepts are introduced before it is assumed the children have mastered the simpler ones.

The study was funded by the Gatsby Foundation, one of the Sainsbury charities, which is now funding a trial introduction of continental maths teaching methods into six primary schools in Barking and Dagenham, Essex. Early indications from the year-old scheme suggest the number of pupils performing poorly in maths is beginning to decline. Heads and class teachers were taken to watch maths lessons in Swiss and German schools before introducing the techniques in their own classrooms.

Graham Last, senior schools inspector for Barking and Dagenham, said year groups on the Continent had minimum standards they were expected to achieve in maths and teachers gave this their very highest priority. "Our national curriculum, in contrast, does not tell you what children should achieve by the end of each year group."

The authority has now produced detailed lesson notes and bought overhead projectors for the primary schools taking part in the project so that teachers can use the continental style of whole-class teaching.

He said: "Children don't get left behind. If, at the end of the oral session, there are four or five children who don't understand what is being taught the teacher can work with them."

David Blunkett, Labour's education spokesman, hopes the study will be examined by government curriculum advisers. "There is a worrying and widening gap in performance in maths between our children and those in other European countries. This huge gap suggests that we must learn from the way in which the subject is taught in countries such as Switzerland and Germany if we are to raise standards."

□ *Laying the Foundations of Numeracy: a comparison of primary school textbooks in Britain, Germany and Switzerland*, by Helvis Bierhoff. National Institute Discussion Paper 90.



On the front line: A nurse comforting a patient at the South Western psychiatric hospital in London

Photograph: Glyn Griffiths

## Psychiatric ward close to despair

The mental health service was in crisis two years ago. Since then, things have got worse. Nicholas Timmins reports

Sapna Gupta, a junior doctor in only her second psychiatric job, punches the telephone in growing desperation. "Have you got a bed?" she says. "Any type of bed? No... No, I've tried there, they've got no beds either."

Her anxiety is over the fate of a young, well-built man waiting in her ward. Originally detained under the Mental Health Act as a risk to himself or others, he absconded from the hospital shortly after Christmas.

The police have just found him miles away in south London. He is so disturbed that no one doubts he needs now to be on a locked ward. But the hospital's own five-bedded locked ward is full. Dr Gupta keeps punching the buttons.

Suddenly there is an explosion. The man is off, out of the ward door, bounding down the stairs to an access door which locks magnetically to keep un-

wanted visitors out. He simply bursts through it, busting the hinges, pursued by two of the ward's four nurses, neither of whom is a match for him physically.

A chase ensues. Dr Gupta keeps phoning. Five minutes later, downcast, the nurses return. "We cornered him in a corridor," one says, "but he just came at us swinging and was away."

The next phone call will be to the police. There is nothing more the hospital can do except tell its community teams that the patient is again on the streets. No one can be sure quite how much of a risk he is to himself or others. He was not in long enough to be assessed.

Dr Gupta, 27, is at the nurses' station on Nelson ward in

Lambeth's South Western psychiatric hospital. The tension in her voice is palpable. So is the atmosphere on the ward, taut like a violin string about to snap. A woman is weeping, uncontrollably, great rivers of tears pouring down her cheeks. A man laughs, hyena-like, when anyone looks at him.

There are 19 beds on this ward. But it is currently responsible for 27 patients. The others are out "on leave" - trial periods of a day or two back in the community. They may do well. Or they may break down. It is better they do well. Their beds are filled. And there is a waiting list of six patients whom the community psychiatric teams would like admitted.

This is a service that across

leaving the inner city because of stress. Dr Roy's service has lost two in the past two years and been able to attract only one - a locum, who will move on.

Dr Roy's solution is not more acute beds, but action to take pressure off the top and bottom of the system. More secure beds to handle the mentally disordered offenders and provide immediate access to those needing medium secure care. More 24-hour staff homes, respite and emergency services out in the community which cost less than an acute hospital place and are better for patients.

At South Western itself, some help is on hand. Next month a high-quality £20m development opens, with seven extra locked beds. But with 25 patients out in the private sector, it does not take a genius to work out that Dr Roy's problems will be eased, not solved.

Consultant psychiatrists are

## Lottery cash for arts 'not elitist'

REBECCA FOWLER

Jeremy Isaacs, the director-general of the beleaguered Royal Opera House, came under further fire last night at the Oxford Union, where the National Lottery was attacked for elitism by critics led by Raymond Gubbay, the impresario. The most colourful attack against the distribution of lottery grants, including £75m for the redevelopment of the Royal Opera, in London, was made by Floella Benjamin, the former presenter of *Play School*.

Mr Isaacs retorted as Miss Benjamin claimed the arts had been hijacked by "arty parties". "It's like having a private party and asking the neighbours to pay for it without inviting them," Ms Benjamin said.

Ms Benjamin suggested that sculptures made out of toilet rolls on *Play School*, which she described as an art form for the masses, should be exhibited at the Tate Gallery. Lord Gower, chairman of the Arts Council who was defending Mr Isaacs, retorted: "They already have."

But the most convincing defence in favour of lottery grants to great art institutions was made by Deborah Bull, principal ballerina for the Royal Ballet. She accused the critics of distribution of lottery money of patronising the public.

"I was the fourth daughter of a travelling salesman in working-class Derby, my parents had never seen a ballet before they saw me dancing one," she said. "We're demeaning people by telling them they cannot be touched by great art."

She was supported by Lord Gower, who said opera was not elitist. The popularity of artists such as Pavarotti, he said, matched that of Mick Jagger.

Despite the recent attacks against him, Mr Isaacs was confident when his side won the debate last night by 122 votes to 47. He compared Britain's public spending on the arts to France, which he declared the cultural capital of Europe.

"We're never going to get quite up there, but we can make sure the rain doesn't come through the Royal Opera House roof as it does today," Mr Isaacs said.

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**ITC hits back at Channel 5 critics**

MARIANNE MACDONALD  
Media Correspondent

The Independent Television Commission yesterday denied acting unlawfully in allowing Channel 5 Broadcasting to provide extra financial information about its licence bid after the deadline.

Its defence came on the second day of a High Court judicial review of the ITC's award of the Channel 5 licence to CSB in October, which the three unsuccessful bidders - Virgin TV, UKTV and Rupert Murdoch's New Century TV - argue was procedurally improper.

They claim that CSB was unfairly allowed to increase its funding for programmes from £206m to £306m after the bids were submitted in May.

But Jonathan Sumption QC, for the ITC, said it was common sense for the regulator to consider the most up-to-date financial figures. He also attacked the argument that CSB had failed to demonstrate it had enough funding to cope in difficult trading situations.

Affidavits from Sir George Russell, the ITC chairman, and Peter Rogers, its deputy chief executive, showed they had few doubts about the ability of the consortium to raise more funds.

The shareholding agreement which the CSB consortium drew up 19 weeks after the deadline in response to what has been portrayed as a tutorial by the ITC on how to improve its bid application was merely clarification, Mr Sumption claimed.

But the ITC's advice was equivalent to an examiner correcting a candidate who had failed to read the questions properly, Sir Patrick Neill, for NCTV, earlier told the court.

NCTV argues that it should be awarded the licence to start next January if the court finds it was unlawfully given to CSB. The case continues today.

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## Zoo waits for its 297lb baby to take her bow

NICHOLAS SCHOON  
Environment Correspondent

Chester Zoo will reveal its new baby elephant to the public tomorrow. Born just before Christmas after a 636-day pregnancy, she drinks 12 litres a day of the powdered milk used for human babies, and has put on 30kg (66lb) in just four weeks and now weighs 135kg (297lb).

The Asiatic elephant baby, whose name will be chosen by viewers of the BBC's *Blue Peter* programme, was shown off to the press yesterday. She has been rejected by her mother. This, but is thriving and lively, and has been "partially integrated" with the eight-strong herd at Chester.

The senior females have been supportive so we're hoping she will fit in well," said the zoo's marketing manager, Chris Vere. Meanwhile keepers are maintaining a 24-hour watch, even sleeping beside her.

The baby is only the second Asiatic elephant to have been

born, and to have survived the critical first four weeks, in a British zoo. The first was also born at Chester; he is now 18 and still resident.

There are between 34,000 and 51,000 of the species left in the wild, about one-tenth the number of the larger African elephant, and the population is falling fast. Even Asia's domesticated elephant population, used for shifting wood and other heavy tasks, is dwindling rapidly in an increasingly mechanised world.

The Asiatic species used to roam from Syria to China, but today its range only stretches from India to Vietnam, with a cut-off group of less than 300 in Yunnan province, China. The numbers in Vietnam are thought to have fallen by three-quarters in 25 years, down to between 300 and 400.

The elephant's forest habitats are disappearing because of logging and farming clearances. Poachers kill the animal for its hides, teeth and ivory. Rising hu-

man occupation around its forests leads to increasing conflict between the animals - which trample fields in search of crops - and impoverished farmers. Up to 300 Indians are killed by the elephants each year.

The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) says the Asiatic elephant has no future in the wild without a concerted effort to preserve its habitats and avert conflicts with people.

There is controversy about how useful a role zoos like Chester can have in saving the species. Mr Vere said that if the Asiatic elephant became extinct in the wild then it could survive in captivity and be reintroduced to the wild, provided that a sufficient area of its forests could be maintained or recreated.

But conservationists doubt whether such a large, social animal could ever make a successful transition from zoo enclosures back to nature. A spokeswoman for the WWF said: "The answer must be to protect their wild habitat."



Trunk call: The new baby Asian elephant at Chester Zoo. She will be shown to the public for the first time tomorrow

Photograph: Craig Easton

## Police tests of CS spray to go ahead in 16 forces

JASON BENNETTO  
Crime Correspondent

CS sprays are to be issued to about 2,500 police patrol officers throughout England and Wales in March, it was announced yesterday.

Chief constables have decided to go ahead with trials of the hand-held incapacitates in 16 forces despite plans for earlier tests being halted after a police instructor was badly injured during a demonstration.

Police chiefs yesterday conceded that the CS spray was potentially dangerous. However, they believe their officers need greater protection from increasingly violent offenders and armed criminals.

Trials of the CS canisters, which are worn on an officer's belt and have a range of up to three metres, will last six months. If successful all officers throughout the country could eventually be issued with the devices. The CS powder is mixed with a solvent inside the canister and sprayed into a person's face. It takes immediate effect and causes streaming eyes and nose, eyelids spasm, breathing difficulties, and in some cases blistering to the skin. Officers will be trained for a day before being given the sprays.

The trials will take place in the Metropolitan Police, and the West Midlands, Merseyside, Greater Manchester, Avon and Somerset, Cambridgeshire, Cleveland, Dorset, Durham, Dyfed-Powys, Kent, Leicestershire, Northumbria, North Yorkshire, West Mercia, and West Yorkshire forces.

They were due to take place last year but were halted after a Metropolitan Police instructor suffered 50 per cent burns to his eyes and had to have them covered for five days. He has warned that the spray is not properly tested and could cause severe injuries to the public. Civil liberty groups have repeatedly argued that not enough is known about the sprays.

Tony Burden, Chief Constable of Gwent and chairman of the Association of Chief Police Officers (Acpo) self-defence sub-committee, admitted the sprays to be put on trial were the same as the one that injured the officer, but said the training and guidance on aftercare had been improved. He said: "There's a need to balance concerns about health with the threat of violence for officers on the street. That threat is increasing daily."

He added that there was a belief within the police that the balance of power was too far tipped in favour of the criminal. He emphasised that officers would have to exercise discretion in using CS, and could only use "reasonable force".

Jim Sharples, president of Acpo and Chief Constable of Merseyside, said the sprays were not a substitute for firearms. "There's a gap between the baton and the firearm and this less-than-lethal option fills that gap."

Similar devices are already in use in France, Belgium and the Netherlands.

The Home Office and the Police Federation, which represents rank-and-file officers, yesterday welcomed the announcement. David Maclean, the Home Office minister, said research had established that CS did not pose a significant health risk.

Chief constables also revealed that they had agreed on the structure of a national police squad to combat organised crime. The new body will have an operational wing made up of the existing six regional crime squads, which will be headed by a national co-ordinator, probably a chief constable. A new police authority should be established to oversee the unit.

A separate intelligence gathering wing will be made up of the National Criminal Intelligence Service and a small number of MI5 officers. The police chiefs want NCIS to be independent from the Home Office.

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### DAILY POEM

#### Poem for a Man with no Sense of Smell

By Kate Clanchy

This is simply to inform you:

that the thickest line in the kink of my hand  
smells like the feel of an old school desk,  
the deep carved names worn sleek with sweat;

that beneath the spray of my expensive scent  
my armpits sound a bass note strong  
as the boom of a palm on a kettle drum;

that the wet flush of my fear is sharp  
as the taste of an iron pipe, midwinter,  
on a child's hot tongue; and that sometimes,

in a breeze, the delicate hairs on the nape  
of my neck, just where you might bend  
your head, might hesitate and brush your lips.

hold a scent frail and precise as a fleet  
of tiny origami ships, just setting out to sea.

Kate Clanchy was born in Glasgow in 1965 and was educated in Edinburgh and Oxford. She now works as a schoolteacher in the East End of London. The recipient of a Gregory Award in 1994, she had work published last year in *Amel New Poets* 2 and a first collection, *Slattern* (Chattro, £6.99), from which this poem is taken, was published earlier this month.

## politics

# Lobbying MP is cleared of guilt under old rules

JOHN RENTOUL  
Political Correspondent

The former Conservative minister Patrick Nicholls was yesterday cleared of wrongdoing in lobbying ministers on behalf of a company in which he had a financial interest before the rules on MPs' disclosure were tightened last November.

Mr Nicholls was the first MP to have his case decided by Sir Gordon Downey, the parliamentary commissioner for standards, whose appointment last year he had bitterly opposed.

But Sir Gordon's report signalled clearly that he would have fallen foul of the new rules, and dismissed his claim that he had done nothing wrong because he would only have received payment if the company were successful. The distinction between past payment and the expectation of future payment "could

not be maintained", it said. Mr Nicholls, MP for Teignbridge, Devon, tried to persuade ministers to buy water-purifying systems from World Water Services, which offered him a 5 per cent shareholding if it made a profit. He had declared his interest in WWS, as required under the old rules, but the new rules—passed when 23 Tories rebelled in a Commons defeat for the Prime Minister—ban all advocacy on behalf of interests from which MPs could benefit.

In a letter to the company, leaked to the press, Mr Nicholls promised: "I can ensure that we are given a hearing... using my own credibility with ministers to promote what WWS has to offer."

Mr Nicholls tabled parliamentary questions to find out about government departments' use of water and wrote to Michael Heseltine, then Presi-

dent of the Board of Trade, plugging WWS and asking about grants to help it expand.

Attacking the appointment of Sir Gordon to oversee MPs' ethics, Mr Nicholls had said: "We got into this position... because two stupid, silly, greedy members did something that most of us would never do," referring to Graham Riddick and David Tredinnick, who were disciplined for being willing to accept cash for questions from reporters posing as businessmen.

Mr Nicholls resigned as adviser to the company after November's vote, but his role was referred to Sir Gordon by John Prescott, Labour's deputy leader.

Mr Prescott said: "Mr Nicholls has been technically cleared but morally condemned. Of course I accept the findings of the report, but most people will rightly be shocked by Mr Nicholls's behaviour."



Testing time: A Russian tourist stands on either side of the Meridian line at the Royal Observatory, in Greenwich, south-east London, ahead of today's second reading in the Commons of the controversial British Time (Extra Daylight) Bill, put forward by the Tory MP John Butterfill, which would bring clocks forward by one hour throughout the year, making evenings lighter but early mornings darker. Photograph: Herbie Knott

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## Major laughs off whiff of Tory unrest

John Major yesterday brushed aside fresh reports of Tory backbench moves to depose him as "silly speculation" and "nonsense".

Laughing it off during Commons Questions was made easier for the Prime Minister by Chris Mullin, Labour MP for Sunderland South, who disingenuously offered his condolences that "the bastards" are plotting again.

The "bastards" was Mr Major's description, picked up on untransmitted tape, of right-wingers in his Cabinet. However reports in some of yesterday's newspapers suggested a "bloodless coup" was being considered by party "grandees".

Mr Mullin said the current difficulties of the Conservative Party were not Mr Major's fault. "He simply has the bad luck to be Prime Minister at the time when the bills are coming in for the Thatcher decade."

"If I might offer him a word of advice, it's not a leadership election he needs to offer them. It's a general election. That would shut them up."

Amid laughter from both sides, Mr Major recalled that the Sunderland MP had some experience, having run the leadership election of one of the losing candidates (Tony Benn) in an earlier Labour Party leadership election.

"So I take with some interest what he says, but perhaps I won't follow it to the letter."

Seemingly buoyed up by the whiff of unrest, the Prime Minister dealt briskly with Ian Pearson, Labour winner of the Dudley West by-election, who wondered what difference had been made by last year's leadership contest. "We have this silly speculation almost every week there is a Thursday in."

Mr Major replied: "It has been nonsense in the past and its nonsense now."

Speculation that the Ministry of Defence would choose Land Rover ambulances rather than an Austrian competitor proved spot on. MPs were told 800 Land Rover ambulances were to be ordered along with 8,000 Defender XDs from the same manufacturer, replacing about half the Army's

fleet of ageing utility vehicles. The orders are worth more than £200m and should help sustain 500 jobs.

The announcement coincided with the Commons' annual debate on the Army during which Nicholas Soames, the Armed Forces Minister, dwelt on the "daunting task" of recruiting enough young soldiers for the fighting end. To maintain the right balance of age and experience the Army must recruit some 15,000 youngsters a year. "The truth is that fewer volunteers are coming forward than we would like," he said.

The Army is running campaigns and advertising at 1,100 job centres. According to the MoD, the Infantry, Armoured Corps and Royal Artillery are together 2,000 short.

Mr Soames, who enjoyed his days in the 11th Hussars, said

**Inside  
Parliament**  
**Stephen  
Goodwin**

the Army was still a career without parallel in variety and excitement. But better than his list of official jollies was the story of Neil Coull, of the Royal Logistic Corps, who was challenged to an impromptu boxing match by the commander of a Muslim road block in Bosnia.

Corp Coull, from Billingham in Cleveland, was on a routine mail run last July when he found a Canadian convoy halted at the road block. He insisted the British forces' mail be allowed through but the commander barred the route until he noticed a pair of boxing gloves in the back of the Land Rover. "Corp Coull, a keen amateur boxer, was promptly challenged to a winner-takes-all boxing match," Mr Soames related. "A makeshift ring was marked out by the roadside and amid much cheering, Corp Coull knocked his opponent to the ground in 30 seconds. As a result, the Queen's mail was allowed through."

## Pay demand MPs seek Nolan support

COLIN BROWN

Senior Tory MPs want the controversial issue of pay rises for MPs to be referred to the Nolan Committee on public standards.

The MPs are seeking the support of the Labour Party and the Liberal Democrats to refer the growing demands for a large increase in their £34,085-a-year salaries to the Nolan Committee to ensure that action is taken.

They fear that Parliament has become hamstrung over MPs' pay rises, after the row surrounding MPs' earnings which followed the Nolan Committee recommendations on their private incomes.

Sir Terence Higgins, a member of the Executive of the 1922 Committee, is one of those senior Tory MPs supporting referral to the Nolan

Committee. He has made it clear to colleagues that it could not be done by Tony Newton, the Leader of the House, without the backing of Ann Taylor, Labour's spokesman, and the Liberal Democrats.

Labour and Liberal Democrat sources said yesterday they both supported the principle of MPs' pay being decided by an independent formula, and may support such a move.

There are misgivings about the idea among some Tory MPs. "Labour will agree to a pay rise for MPs, providing we stop all our outside earnings. I don't think we'd like that," said one Tory backbencher.

A poll in *Parliamentary Monitor* by Harris Political Research this week showed that both Conservative and Labour MPs want a substantial pay rise.



# Home Office admits jobless link to crime

HEATHER MILLS  
Home Affairs Correspondent

Unemployment is forcing a new generation of young men into a kind of "perpetual adolescence" that leads to more crime, according to Home Office research.

The study provides little comfort for ministers, not only because it underlines links between unemployment and offending, but also because it suggests that the threat of being caught and imprisoned did not deter them. Completed two years ago, the study was one of six which the Government was accused of "sitting on" because it did not like the conclusions.

It has found that men are no longer growing out of their offending behaviour – mainly theft and burglary – in their late teens, and are instead continuing their criminal activities well into their twenties. There was, said the report, "little evidence that young male offenders develop a moral conscience which may inhibit their offending as they grow older". The study concludes that young people today

face more serious hazards in making the transition from childhood to adulthood – in particular the availability and heavy use of drugs increasing the risk of criminal activity.

But while girls, who, between 14 and 17, offend almost as much as their male counterparts, mature out of the cycle, boys do not. A key factor is the inability to find work – traditionally one of the main ways of "providing a sense of direction and security and bestowing the status of manhood upon young males," the report says.

Researchers questioned more than 2,500 young people aged between 14 and 25 about their lifestyle, backgrounds, family life, schooling – and any offences they had committed. They were also questioned about their use of drugs.

They found that a quarter of all juvenile crime is committed by a hard core of just 3 per cent of young offenders. Poor parenting and early truancy from school were key factors. Young people living with both natural parents were less likely to offend than those living with

one parent or in a step-family, although young men who had had a particularly bad relationship with their father were particularly likely to offend.

The survey also found that one in two males and one in three females had admitted to committing offences, with the same numbers admitting to using drugs – mostly cannabis.

The report, by John Graham and Ben Bowling, recommends targeting drug abuse programmes at 13- and 14-year-olds, making schools the focus of community crime prevention strategies, and developing community based schemes to support and "parent" young men who have no family support.

Presented yesterday to the first meeting of a new ministerial group on juveniles, it also found that young Asians are less likely to commit offences or use drugs than either whites or Afro-Caribbeans; that the peak age for offending among men is 21, and 16 for women.

■ *Young People and Crime*, Research and Planning Unit, 50 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H 9AT

## Block on parents urged

WENDY BERLINER  
Education Correspondent

Schools should be allowed to ban pupils whose parents attack staff or threaten violence even if the child has done nothing to warrant exclusion, Britain's biggest head teachers' organisation says today.

Head teachers fed up of being attacked by parents who object to them disciplining their children ask the Government today why they should be expected to educate the children of abusive parents.

Last year, 69 members of the National Association of Head Teachers were assaulted or violently abused. Twelve have claims before the Criminal Injuries Compensation Board.

The NAHT also says it should be allowed to refuse to take in violent pupils excluded from other schools or to reinstate violent or disruptive pupils of their own unless there is a favourable report on them and the school feels it can cope.

The NAHT makes its points in a response to a Government review of the rules governing the management of disruptive and violent pupils by schools.

The heads are complaining that the review does not include the activities of violent parents nor the problems of schools forced to admit pupils who have disrupted other schools.

The issue of thuggish and dangerous behaviour in schools has been given fresh prominence and urgency by the death

of Philip Lawrence, the London head teacher stabbed when he went to the aid of one of his pupils.

The association claims in its submission to the Government that the problem is rapidly reaching "nightmare proportions" as the system for dealing with excluded pupils breaks down. Schools are being forced by their local education authorities to admit teenage "trunks" whose needs could not be met in mainstream schools.

Problems are compounded when local appeal committees overturn school governors' decisions to exclude pupils, the association says. The NAHT is calling for appeal committees to be chaired by someone legally qualified.

## Branson's balloon waits on weather



Up but not yet away: Richard Branson (left) bides his time with a practice hot-air balloon flight over Marrakesh yesterday. Photograph: John Voos

CHARLES ARTHUR  
Marrakesh

Adverse weather conditions over Asia have forced Richard Branson and his Virgin Global Challenger team to delay their attempt to fly around the world in a giant helium-filled balloon, at least until next Tuesday.

Computer forecasts by the Meteorological Office, in Brack-

nell, Berkshire, of the weather at 30,000 feet for the next four days suggest that once the balloon had crossed Europe, strong winds would blow it so far north that it would quickly take on up to two tonnes of ice, and be forced to the ground.

Martin Harris, a meteorological expert from the University of North London, and an adviser to the team, said yesterday: "We have to wait until conditions in the jetstream are just right. At the moment the winds would push the balloon north. There the air is so cold that as soon as it came down ... into more damp air it would ice up – just like an ice lolly when you take it out of the fridge."

However, this news has not caused a depression to cross Mr Branson's warm front. "Soon-

er or later, we're going to fly," he said. "And Morocco is not a bad place to wait in."

Poor weather has also delayed Henk Brink, a Dutchman who had intended to launch a rival attempt from the Netherlands on Sunday. Some reports suggest Mr Brink may abandon his attempt altogether.

Mr Branson and his team-member Per Lindstrand, who

designed the balloon, said they feared ice more than any other weather phenomenon.

"Lightning just makes a hole in the balloon," said Mr Lindstrand. "You would have to come down, but it won't kill you." This was proven in the 1950s, when lightning struck one of the first balloons attempts to cross the Atlantic. The pilot's name? Bobby Sparks.

## Crash Chinook carried no black box

The absence of a £10,000 cockpit voice recorder hindered and prolonged the investigation into the helicopter crash that killed 29 people including Northern Ireland counter-terrorism experts, a crash investigator said yesterday.

A senior Department of Transport inspector, Anthony Cable, told the inquiry into the tragedy that "black box" accident data recorders and cock-

pit voice recorders commonly yielded "major benefits" in air-traffic investigations. But the Mark II Chinook helicopter was fitted with neither when it plunged into the Mull of Kintyre on 2 June 1994. The crash killed 10 high-ranking RUC officers, nine Army intelligence experts, six MI5 experts and the four-man RAF crew.

Mr Cable, of the DoT's Air Accidents Investigation Branch,

told the inquiry: "The AAIB recorder section estimates that a CVR [cockpit voice recorder] typically costs \$10,000 to \$15,000, including the unit and its installation." While it was preferable to have both, a cockpit voice recorder alone could yield much information, and had been used to great effect in several investigations.

Mr Cable, on his third day in the witness box, summarised

what he had been able to establish. The doomed machine hit Beinn na Lìce, a hill behind the Mull of Kintyre lighthouse, at a height of 810ft, and travelling at about 150 knots at the point of impact. At the point of impact, it was climbing at a 20 degree angle relative to the horizontal.

Engine and instrument indications all suggested normal operations. Almost all parts of the

flight control mechanical systems were retrieved with no evidence of pre-impact failure, although the possibility of a control system jam could not be "positively" ruled out.

Earlier, Mr Cable said a study of the helicopter's navigation computer by the manufacturers, Racal, showed the navigation system was working "perfectly" and the pilots had been using it properly.

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with strikingly diagnostic terms. It's a gastrointestinal virus called by the Norwalk and E. coli bacteria and long. It has been associated with the prevalent agent of gastroenteritis, is one of its more common names, is called Norwalk.

The usually leads to the presence of one of the few diarrhoeal forms of gastroenteritis, usually characterised by watery, non-bloody stools, abdominal cramps, nausea and vomiting. It is usually self-limiting, with the duration of the virus's infection usually lasting from 1 to 3 days. The virus is usually spread by person-to-person contact, but also by water, food, and shellfish.

Several patients and multiple outbreaks in the hospital region may also occur. This is a true viral, usually seen in symptoms such as watery, non-bloody stools, abdominal cramps, nausea and vomiting. It is usually self-limiting, with the duration of the virus's infection usually lasting from 1 to 3 days. The virus is usually spread by person-to-person contact, but also by water, food, and shellfish.

Intensive research has indicated that the duration of gastroenteritis should not usually be of a period in excess of ninety six hours.

Those who are particularly susceptible to gastroenteritis include the elderly and the diabetic, as well as those who are in the process of receiving chemotherapy and immunosuppressive therapy.

And I don't think it needs a lesson of my professional standing to tell you that in addition patients who have been previously diagnosed as suffering from gastroenteritis have a significantly greater risk of a re-infection of the gastrointestinal tract.

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German inferno: Cause of Lubeck fire a mystery but police suspect Nazis are involved

## Hostel blaze kills 10 migrants

IMRE KARACS  
Bonn

At least 10 people, including four children, were killed and scores injured yesterday in a huge blaze which gutted a house occupied by asylum seekers in the Baltic port of Lübeck. Although German police left open the possibility that the blaze was caused by accident, they questioned three young men on suspicion of arson.

"We are following up every avenue. Everything from technical fault to arson is conceivable," said Winfried Tabarelli, the head of Lübeck's criminal police. The three suspects, one of whom was described as a skinhead, were all from Grevenmühl, 20 miles east across the border that used to separate the two Germanys.

They were known to the police, but not for neo-Nazi activities. Nevertheless, the authorities did not rule out a racial motive, and the Mayor of Lübeck, Michael Böttcher, called for a demonstration against neo-Nazi violence. Last night some 4,000 people, many carrying flowers, gathered in the centre of the city to commemorate the victims.

The blaze erupted shortly before 4am and spread rapidly through the four-storey building, turning into a fireball as it consumed the timber in the converted loft. The house, like similar refugee hostels across Germany, was packed with people, many of them probably illegal immigrants. The building had 45 registered residents, mostly Zaireans, Togolese, Syrians, Lebanese and Poles, but fire-fighters counted well over 60.

Apart from the 10 dead, 55 people were injured, suffering from burns, suffocation and

fractures as they leapt out of the windows in panic. Five people were last night in critical condition. So intense were the flames that rescue workers were for a long time unable to enter the building, fearing that the structure would collapse.

As stunned neighbours last night gathered round the charred ruin of what used to be a solid turn-of-the-century building, the cause of the fire remained unclear. Some city officials claimed to have evidence, not confirmed by police, that the flames engulfed the house from



Refugee anger: An African victim blames arsonists

several directions simultaneously, indicating the fire was started deliberately.

If they turn out to be right, and if the motive proves to be racist, then yesterday's events will go down in history as the most murderous attack yet by neo-Nazis. Until now that infamy was claimed by the town of Solingen near Cologne, where two Turkish women and three girls perished on the night of 29 May 1993 in a fire started by right-wing extremists.

That attack, followed by violent demonstrations by Turks, shocked Germany and the rest

of the world. The four people involved received sentences of between 10 and 15 years, and the authorities clamped down on neo-Nazis.

But while many extremists were forced underground or abroad, racist attacks have persisted, on a smaller scale. These are often perpetrated by freelance hooligans rather than organised neo-Nazis.

Lübeck itself has had its share of trouble. During Passover in 1994 its synagogue was the first in Germany to draw the Nazi fire since the Second World War. A year later, a different set of thugs returned, setting the synagogue's store room ablaze.

The countryside around Lübeck is a hotbed of neo-Nazi activity. Day-trippers from the impoverished east go there looking for trouble, harassing foreigners and spreading propaganda. Not far from the city lies the town of Mölmin, notorious for one of the first attacks on immigrants in what became a vogue after German unification. In 1992 a Turkish woman and two girls were burnt to death in a manner that was to become the hallmark of neo-Nazi terror.

But though the statistics seemingly indicate no break in the pattern, the violence abated after Solingen. Reports of fires at immigrant homes appear in the German press almost daily. There was one such incident yesterday at the town of Burgwedel, 120 miles south of Lübeck, where arsonists tried to set a home for Yugoslav immigrants on fire. But this may well turn out to have been the work of members of the same community, just as most attacks on Turkish targets these days are blamed on Kurdish extremists.



Fanning the flames: Firemen bring the Lübeck blaze under control in an incident which has again highlighted attacks on asylum-seekers. Photograph: Michael Probst/AP

## Court bans Mitterrand doctor's book

MARY DEJEVSKY  
Paris

In a landmark decision, a Paris judge yesterday banned distribution of a book by the late President François Mitterrand's doctor and ordered the publisher to pay a heavy fine for copies already sold. The judge, Jacqueline Cochard, described the book, *The Great Secret*, as a "particularly serious intrusion" into the family's privacy and instructed the seizure of all remaining copies.

In the book, Dr Claude Gubler accused Mitterrand of lying about his cancer since it was diagnosed in 1981 and said that, in his opinion, the late president was "incapable" of exercising his official functions for the last six months he was in office. He later clarified that he had meant physically rather than mentally incapable.

The judgment delighted the French political establishment, which had subjected Dr Gubler to a verbal lynching since an extract from the book appeared in the magazine *Paris-Match* earlier this week. Leading politicians of all parties had rushed to deplore what they said was a breach of medical confidentiality and anathematised Dr Gubler variously as a "traitor", "liar" and "criminal".

He was also denounced by professional medical associations and risks being struck off.

Dr Gubler was Mitterrand's doctor for 13 years and wrote the book jointly with a former journalist at *Paris-Match*. It chronicles the progress of the president's cancer from its diagnosis six months after he came to office in 1981 until 1994

when Dr Gubler left the president's service. Until 1992, Dr Gubler revealed, the diagnosis had been classified a state secret and all reference to it was omitted from the regular medical reports Mitterrand had undertaken to publish.

The case for the ban was brought by members of Mitterrand's family: his widow, Danielle, their two sons, Jean-Christophe and Gilbert, his mistress of 20 years, Anne Pingeot, and their daughter, Mazarine. They instituted proceedings immediately after the first excerpt appeared on Tuesday. The book was published on Wednesday.

As well as being banned from distributing the book further, the publisher, Editions Plon, must also pay a fine of 1,000 francs (£133) for each copy sold - more than 10 times the 98-franc cover price.

Mrs Cochard based her judgment on what she said was a person's absolute right to privacy. "Every individual," she said, "whatever his rank, has the right to respect for his private life." The book she said was "a particularly serious intrusion into... the private family life of President Mitterrand". She added that the right extended to the individual's family.

She said the offence was all the more intolerable because the book appeared within days of President Mitterrand's death.

Dr Gubler's counsel had argued that the "freedom of every Frenchman to know about the health of the head of state" took precedence over the protection of personal privacy.

The doctor and his publishers have launched an appeal.

## IN BRIEF

## Nigerian ruler's son killed in air crash

Lagos — A presidential jet carrying Ibrahim Abacha, the eldest son of the Nigerian military ruler, General Sani Abacha, crashed on Wednesday night, killing all 14 people aboard. The pilot had reported engine problems shortly before the crash near Kano airport, in the north of the country, the National News Agency of Nigeria said. An unknown group calling itself United Front for Nigeria's Liberation claimed responsibility for the crash.

## Serb 'killer' held

Karlsruhe — A Serb who has been living in Germany for nearly three years has been arrested on suspicion of murdering 27 Muslims in 1992, the chief federal prosecutor's office said. The man, apparently a Bosnian Serb identified only as 34-year-old Novislav D., was arrested on Wednesday in Munich.

## Matinee idol dies

Hyderabad — N T Rama Rao, the matinee idol turned political leader, died of a massive heart attack, only months after being turned out of office by his son-in-law, Chandrababu Naidu. Rama Rao, 73, had led his Telugu Desam Party to a landslide victory in 1994 elections in the state of Andhra Pradesh.

Obituary, Page 16

## Death train arrest

Lusaka — The driver of one of two passenger trains that collided close to the Zambian border town of Livingstone, killing at least 22 people on Wednesday, has been arrested. "According to Zambia Railways management, the driver disobeyed instructions, leading to the collision," a Southern Province official said.

## Ministers quit

New Delhi — An \$18m (£11.8m) bribery scandal reached the core of the Indian government as President Shankar Dayal Sharma accepted the resignations of the Agriculture Minister, Balram Jakhar, the Human Resources Development Minister, Madhav Rao Scindia, and the Parliamentary Affairs Minister, Vidya Charan Shukla.

## 'No' to coalition

Ankara — The Motherland Party leader, Mesut Yilmaz, rejected an offer from the Islamist Welfare Party to form a coalition, effectively ending the Islamists' hopes of coming to power.

## Rocking to fame

New York — David Bowie, Gladys Knight and the Pips, the Shirelles, Jefferson Airplane, Pink Floyd, the Velvet Underground and the late blues bandleader Little Willie John were inducted into the Rock'n'Roll Hall of Fame on Wednesday night.

## Juppé to spend £2bn reviving inner cities

MARY DEJEVSKY  
Paris

The French Prime Minister, Alain Juppé, yesterday put forward a plan intended to boost deprived urban areas.

Mr Juppé announced a development programme for 700 deprived urban areas across France, and a subsidy of 15bn francs (£2bn) to help to fund it, making it one of the largest state projects ever.

The programme, which had been promised by Jacques Chirac during his campaign for the presidency last year, was given special priority after a rash of rioting and unrest in the suburbs of French cities over the summer.

The measures include the

establishment of 20 enterprise zones, which will be exempt from local and business taxes for five years; the provision of 4,000 extra police; new units for repeat juvenile offenders; and the creation of 100,000 jobs over four years - to be funded in part by the state and restricted to those between the ages of 18 and 25. One in four under-25s in France is unemployed, and the proportion on many housing estates is much higher.

In line with Mr Chirac's New Year pledge to make government ministers more accessible and more visible in the provinces, Mr Juppé chose to introduce his plan in the southern port city of Marseilles against the backdrop of some of the worst slums in France.

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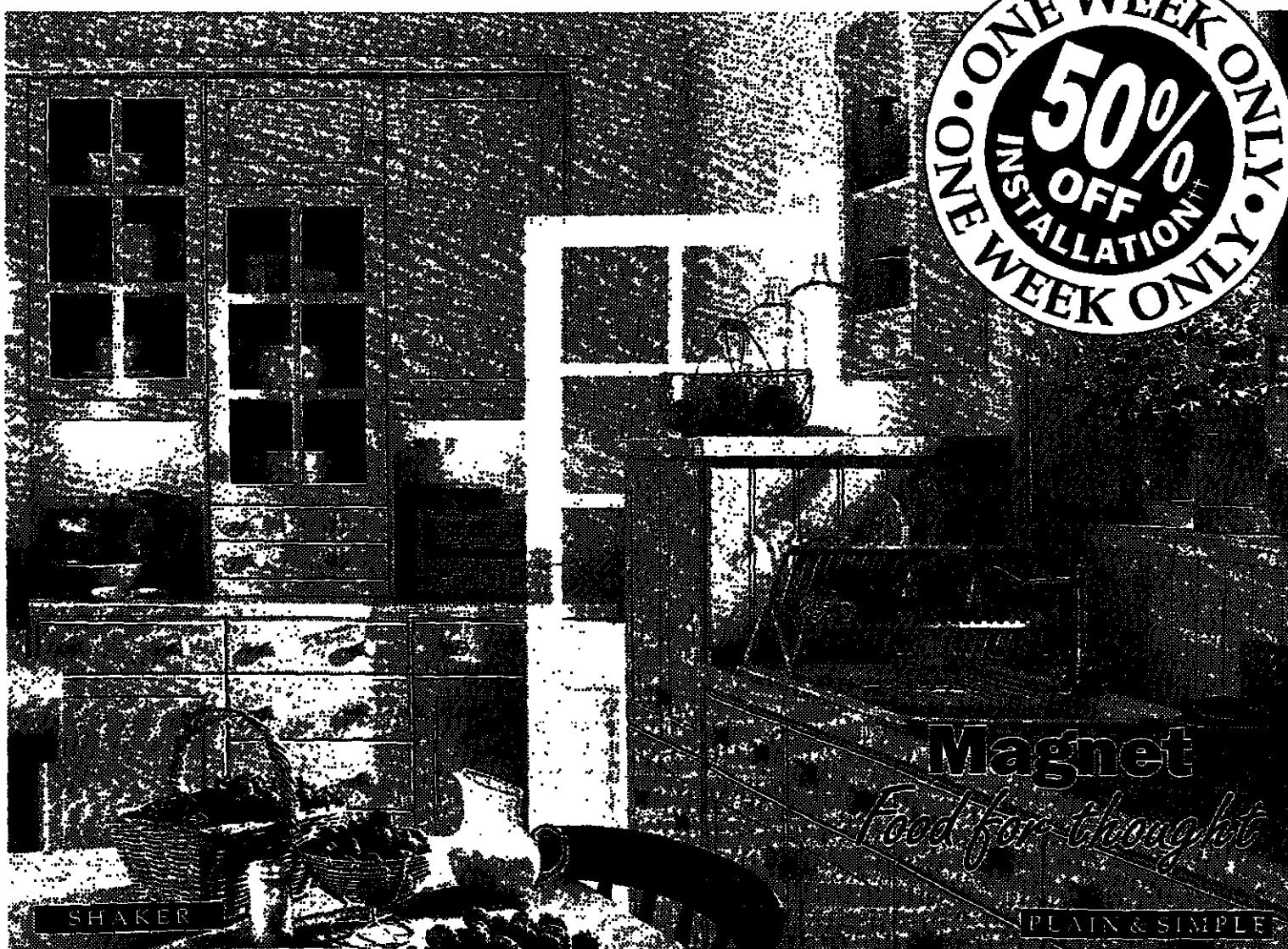
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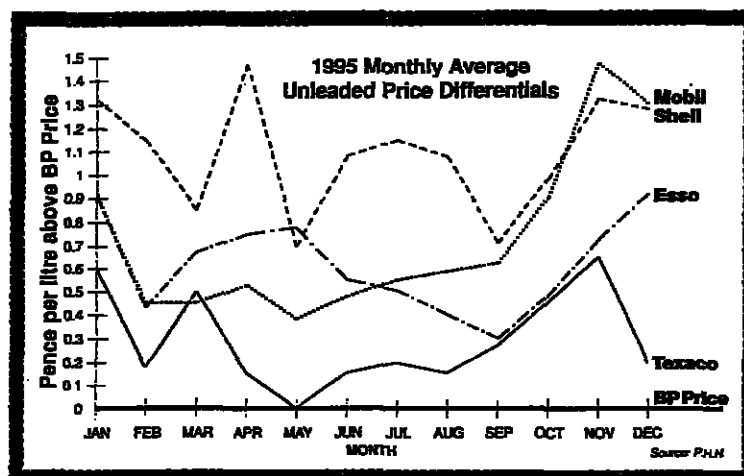
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## international

# Guns fall silent, but the truth is elusive

PHIL REEVES  
near Pervomayskoye

As darkness fell, the landscape of northern Dagestan, pristine under a fresh fall of snow, fell silent after a day of intermittent bombing which had finally reduced the village to ruins.

But the counting was still going on. Boris Yeltsin said 153 Chechen fighters had been killed, and 28 captured; the Russian forces had lost only 26 soldiers and 82 hostages were freed while 18 were unaccounted for, possibly escaped. But these figures must remain at the very least, highly dubious.

If the President is right then it gives the lie to statements by his Federal Security Service which on Wednesday said Russian forces were finally finishing off the operation with "massive fire" after the Chechens had massacred "practically all" of their hostages, apart from 28 who were either freed or escaped.

Mr Yeltsin's claims were also at odds with a figure of 42 freed hostages given by his Prime Minister, Viktor Chernomyrdin, and added to a day of confusion which owed much to the Kremlin's decision to expel journalists from the vicinity of Pervomayskoye for the last phase of the assault.

The hostages themselves, taken after the Chechen Lone Wolf group seized a hospital in Kizlyar, were far from convinced that the Russian soldiers had their best interests at heart. Dima Alexanderovich, 38, eyes red with fatigue, said he escaped after breaking through Russian lines with a band of Chechens. He denied Russian claims that the Chechens executed any of the hostages. "They never shot anyone," he said, "they didn't abuse us, they did not even swear."

Mr Alexanderovich, a driver at the hospital at Kizlyar, told Agence France-Presse that he never felt at risk from the Chechens but from his rescuers. The Russians almost killed him on numerous occasions, he said. "The last two days they were simply carpet bombing us. There's not a house left undamaged."

Kurban Ibargimovich, 31, said that on Wednesday when the Russians intensified bombing the Chechens tried to break

through their lines to Chechnya and he went with them. "There was total panic. No one thought we would live. There was firing on three sides and it seemed there was no hope," he said. "They were firing everything - machine-guns, grenade launchers, everything. It was hell."

The truth about the death toll, and the conduct of the operation, remains elusive. Mr Yeltsin also said that the reason the assault on the small village was so protracted was that it concealed an underground base with concrete gun emplacements, a bizarre claim.

What was clear though was that the Russians carried through the threat to use massive force to end the 10-day crisis. Throughout Wednesday night, the Russians pounded the village with Grad missiles and heavy artillery in the most intense assault of the last three days. Yesterday morning the bombardment continued intermittently, interrupted by occasional volleys of machine-gun fire before dying away in the afternoon.

Last night details of the casualties caused by the bombing were trickling in. Russian TV crews who were taken to within 500m of the village by the military authorities, saw 30 bodies, apparently Chechen fighters. They said that some of the guerrillas had broken out of Pervomayskoye, which was reduced to rubble, and had been mowed down after penetrating Russian lines.

A Russian soldier also produced a video tape of what appeared to be about 20 Chechens taken prisoner by the Russians. Meanwhile, unconfirmed reports circulated that the rebel leader, Salman Raduyev, had escaped from the blitzed village along with 100 fellow fighters.

In the early hours yesterday the Russians suffered another humiliation when Chechen rebels managed to attack the forces from the rear by mounting a raid in nearby Soviet-skoje, reportedly killing three policemen.

Mr Yeltsin will do his best to squeeze political advantage from this affair, presenting himself as a decisive leader willing to crush Chechen terrorism. But the operation took too long and was too badly bungled for him to gain much credit.



Aftermath: A Russian officer searches the body of a Chechen rebel killed during the assault on Pervomayskoye

Photograph: Reuters

## Ship hijackers play to media circus

HUGH POPE  
Istanbul

The drama of a Black Sea ferry, the *Avrasya*, hijacked by pro-Chechen gunmen holding more than 100 Russian hostages, was due to reach a media-focused climax late last night as the steamed towards Istanbul and the promise of a big news conference for the hijackers to condemn Russia's conduct of the war in Chechnya.

Overtaken by the events in Dagestan and under pressure by the Turkish authorities and the Chechen leader, Dzhokhar Dudayev, the hijackers dropped their threat to blow up the ship if Russia did not end its assault on Chechen militants who had been holding Russians hostage in the village of Pervomayskoye.

"I trust you. I accept your

control. We will come to Istanbul and make our press statement," said the chief hijacker, Muhammed Tokcan, in negotiations to end the crisis, a tape of which was played on Turkish television.

Turkey's Transport Minister said the security forces would prefer the *Avrasya* not to travel through the Bosphorus to Istanbul, because it was rigged to explode. It was hijacked on Tuesday night in the Turkish port of Trabzon.

The minister suggested the ship put in at Ereğli, which the *Avrasya* had reached at nightfall. But a Turkish official said "no decision has been made to stop them. We are seeking a peaceful settlement. Other possibilities are only a last resort."

The Foreign Ministry dismissed an offer from President

Boris Yeltsin to send Russian special forces to help storm the ferry, whose Turkish captain says it is carrying 114 Russian passengers. The 40-man crew is almost all Turkish, as are another 43 passengers.

Television stations have turned the crisis into a live 24-hour drama, so much so that officials in charge of negotiations had trouble getting through on ship-to-shore radio telephones. "Our media is unbelievable, unstoppable, out of control," lamented an official. The hijackers also have an unusual attitude: the ferry captain said they have been zapping through the channels on a television set on the bridge to check on the coverage they are getting.

They faxed *Hürriyet* newspaper to complain about a headline saying "the terror of

Chechnya" had spread to Turkey, and an editor at *Cumhuriyet* had to defend his judgement that the hijacking of innocents was terrorism. "You talk about us as terrorists. If you are a journalist, you have to be honourable and tell the truth," railed a hijacker who, though he spoke Turkish, said he was a Chechen.

It is thought that two of the hijackers may be Chechens and another from Abkhazia, a Muslim part of Georgia. The five others are thought to be Turkish citizens of Caucasian descent, including the leader, Mr Tokcan, whose father is an imam in their native Abkhazia.

All have fought in the Caucasus, and Mr Tokcan, who got his military training as a Turkish commando fighting the Kurds, is a close friend of the

Chechen hero Shamil Basayev. Mr Tokcan's Chechen fiancée is said to have been killed during Russian attacks on Chechnya.

Turks of Caucasian origin have voiced sympathy with the hijackers, helped by the fact that the only casualty so far has been a Turkish harbour official slightly wounded in the storming of the *Avrasya*. Most other Turks also sympathise with their Chechen fellow Muslims, but opinion-formers and columnists seem to be reserving judgement until the outcome is known.

Tansu Ciller, the caretaker Prime Minister, has also kept a low profile, leaving the crisis in the hands of a team in the security directorate. Turkey is still trying to form a new government after the indecisive elections on 24 December.

## Assault 'reckless' about hostages

BRIAN KILLEN  
Reuters

Moscow — *Izvestia* said yesterday that special forces were reckless and disorganised when they launched the assault on Chechen rebels in Pervomayskoye this week.

The newspaper's correspondent, Valery Yakov, who spent three days near the battle zone defying a ban on reporters, described scenes of chaos, confusion and disinformation in which troops showed scant regard for the lives of the hostages.

"To call this an operation to save hostages is, to say the least, cynical," Mr Yakov wrote. "Those who remain alive are not those alleged to have been saved, but those lucky enough to survive."

Mr Yakov reached the village of Pervomayskoye with two other Russian journalists by slipping across the nearby border from Chechnya. "You would need a rich imagination to talk about the borders being sealed with a reliable cordon."

They joined Russian forces in trenches only a few hundred metres from rebel positions on the eve of the storming of the village, which started on Monday with an attack by helicopters and artillery.

The three were ejected on Wednesday after being detained and questioned when they ran into the Federal Security Service director, Mikhail Barsukov, who was in command of the operation.

Mr Yakov dismissed official statements that the storming was necessary because the rebels had shot dead six of the hostages as well as a group of Dagestani elders seeking to negotiate. "Nothing of the kind happened in Pervomayskoye," he said.

"All of the firing by the federal forces landed not so much around the rebels as around the hostages," Mr Yakov said.

"What was actually happening resembled freeing of hostages least of all. This was a real military operation to storm an enemy village using all forces and resources."

## Yeltsin vows to bring war home to Dudayev

HELEN WOMACK  
Moscow

President Boris Yeltsin gave an ominous signal yesterday that, with the operation to clear Pervomayskoye of Chechen rebels more or less over, Russia would now step up the war

in Chechnya itself with a direct attack on the rebel leader Dzhokhar Dudayev.

"We taught a good lesson to Dudayev," the President said, briefing reporters on the four-day battle on the Dagestan border. "Now we have to deal a blow to Dudayev's strongholds where there is no civilian population in order to put an end to terrorism on Russian soil."

On the ferry seizure by pro-Chechen gunmen in Turkey, he added: "Terrorism has spread to Turkey, which means one can wait no longer. This is already international terrorism."

Evidently Mr Yeltsin has it in mind to strike at the villages in the mountains of southern Chechnya where the Muslim militants have been based since being pushed out of their capital, Grozny, last year. From here, they carried out a terrorist raid on the southern Russian town of Budymovsk last June as well as the latest attack, which began in the Dagestani town of Kizlyar last week and ended with 100 hostages being dragged to Pervomayskoye.

It is perhaps too early to draw conclusions as to how Russians will now view their President. He is more hawkish, not only in response to the hostage crisis but also as a result of the victory of his Communist and nationalist opponents in December's elections. When he launched the assault on Pervomayskoye, an poll showed Muscovites almost equally divided on the wisdom of being tougher with the Chechens.

The new parliament, which on Wednesday elected the Communist Gennady Seleznyov as Speaker, is to spare the government a vote of no-confidence, restricting itself to issuing a statement urging an "adequate response" to the Chechen rebellion.

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Pictured is The Riverside Hotel in Monmouth, Wales

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Some hotels, at the proprietors' discretion, will accept the voucher for longer stays on the same 2 For 1 basis, so you can stay for 4 nights for the price of 2 for example. Please check with your chosen hotel when making your booking.

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After Papandreou Socialist MPs choose low-key reformer to succeed tough-talking nationalist

## Friend of Europe is Greek PM

ANDREW GUMBEL  
Athens

Greece's ruling party last night chose its leading dissident, Costas Simitis, as the country's new Prime Minister, signalling a major shift away from the charismatic populism of his predecessor, Andreas Papandreou, in favour of reform and closer co-operation with the European Union.

Mr Simitis, a 59-year-old economist and commercial lawyer with broad experience of government, beat out challenges from two Papandreou loyalists, the party apparition Akis Tsochadzopoulos and Defence Minister Gerassimos Arsenis, in a tense two-round ballot of Pasok's parliamentary party.

Despite being frozen out of the government and the Pasok leadership for the past four

months, Mr Simitis was the most popular of the three candidates and commanded the most international respect. He is widely seen as the man most likely to lead Pasok to victory at the general elections slated for October 1997.

"Our country should become a substantive contributor to European developments, play a role in the Balkans and the eastern Mediterranean and create bonds of co-operation that will contribute to our development," Mr Simitis said in his hustings speech to Pasok's central committee earlier this week.

This was a far cry from the rhetoric of Mr Papandreou, who until his illness and incapacitation last November held up EU development funds, created an international furor by delaying recognition of Macedonia, and seemed bent on up-

holding Greece's place in the world by turning his nose up at anyone who disagreed with him.

Political sources say Mr Simitis is likely to invite his leading dissident friends, the so-called "Gang of Four", back into government, appointing the fiery former European Affairs minister, Theodore Pangalos, to the Foreign Ministry and bringing the former European Commissioner, Vasso Papandreou, into his economic team.

Mr Simitis would also like to transform Pasok from a populist movement into a mainstream centre-left party, along the lines of Tony Blair's Labour Party. This may prove more difficult, however, as the party leadership remains nominally in Mr Papandreou's hands and elections for a new party leader are not expected until June.

Mr Simitis will fight hard to



Costas Simitis: Most likely to lead Pasok to victory

appoint one of his loyalists to the deputy leadership in the meantime. If he fails, he will have to temper his reformist instincts to avoid splitting the party. A serious rift does not look likely, however, since all sides

know that Pasok's best chance is to stay united.

Mr Simitis had been favourite to win the contest from the outset, but faced a far rougher ride than expected from Mr Tsochadzopoulos, who garnered considerable support following Mr Papandreou's resignation on Monday night.

Thanks to last-minute campaigning by his close colleague, the Cabinet Secretary, Antonis Livanis, Mr Tsochadzopoulos was level-pepping with Mr Simitis on the first ballot with 53 votes, followed by Mr Arsenis on 50 and a fourth candidate, Yannis Charalambopoulos, on 11. On the second ballot, however, Mr Simitis beat his rival by 86 votes to 75.

The atmosphere among Papandreou loyalists last night was one of rats leaving a sinking ship. The career of Mr

Livanis, who has virtually run the country during the past two years as Mr Papandreou's health has failed, is almost certainly over. More junior acolytes, however, were quick to switch allegiances, among them Elisabeth Papazoi, a close adviser of Mr Papandreou's wife Dimitra.

Dimitra will almost certainly be the biggest loser. She will lose her job as head of the Prime Minister's private office and abandon all ambitions to enter parliament for Pasok.

Mr Simitis's victory is not likely to cheer Mr Papandreou either. The two had not spoken since Mr Simitis was fired as industry minister last September. "According to members of his entourage," a European diplomat reported, "Mr Papandreou's only remaining wish is to live long enough to make life hell for his successor."

## Mystery birth of Tex-Mex drug lord

Juan Garcia Abrego, the alleged Mexican cocaine baron, was born again - on the other side of the US-Mexican border from the site of his first appearance in the world. Garcia Abrego, who was captured near Monterrey on Sunday and hastily deported to a delighted United States the next day, has two birth certificates. Legal wrangling over them may determine his future.

His birth was first registered in Cameron County, Texas, and he is, therefore, American. Mexico's interior ministry insisted, producing faxed copies of the 1944 registration.

But just over the border, a Matamoros civil registry official said little Juan's birth certificate shows he was born "on September 13, 1944, in this municipality."

Que pasa? Along the Rio Grande, parents often register their children on both sides of the porous border. If Garcia Abrego can prove he is Mexican, he may be able to challenge his deportation to the US, where he starred on the FBI's most-wanted list.

Keen to wash their hands of him, Mexican officials are searching for his American passport, asserting that he "didn't have a Mexican passport at least [not] a real one."

Garcia Abrego's US nationality, they say, was the reason he was so speedily dispatched to a Texas jail after his arrest. Government critics, however, say the haste had more to do with getting him out of Mexico before he could either bribe anyone or make statements that could embarrass officials.

The Prince of Wales is not the only heir to a European throne under fire for hunting. Willem-Alexander of the Netherlands is ducking the same bullets. Dutch newspapers have been running advertisements calling on the Crown Prince to lay down his weapons, which he usually points at deer and wild boar.

"The heavy responsibility you bear as our future king cannot be combined with spreading death and destruction amongst defenceless animals," said the Foundation For Critical Wildlife Care.

By the start of the week, the prince had received several hundred faxes urging him to give up the pastime. Little hunting is actually done in the



Garcia Abrego: Future hangs on his nationality

developed Netherlands, but stocks of boar and deer are maintained in the forests of Het Loo palace - and 170 of each species were shot last year.

Gaza's best-known female guerrilla used to throw grenades at Israeli army jeeps. In Nima al-Helo's last attack, in 1972, she lost an arm and an eye. Now she is hurling herself into the campaign for a seat in the Palestinian legislature.

Ms Helo is one of only 28 women among the 676 candidates chasing 88 seats on the council. Other statistics: she was detained for a total of 14 years, and spent 27 months on the run.

Her university classrooms, she said, were Israeli prison cells, and in a society where marriage and children are expected of women, Ms Helo has other priorities. "I have an agenda," she told Reuters. "To educate women, to protect the families of martyrs, to rebuild families destroyed by the Israeli occupation."

Twenty-five years on, Al Gore still remembers Dr Trebla Erog, a Swedish gynaecologist. At a Nashville dinner to raise money for Jerry Thompson, a reporter at the *Tennessean* who has cancer, the Vice-President recalled his days as a young reporter for the newspaper. Mr Thompson, he said, initiated new staff by phoning them, posing as a funeral director, and offering information for an obituary. The name of the deceased would be the reporter's name spelled backwards.

Albert Gore dutifully took down the information on Trebla Erog. And Mr Gore admitted, "I wasn't even close" to catching on to the joke.

Maryann Bird

## I-For faces first Bosnia deadlines

CHRISTOPHER BELLAMY  
Gorji Vakuf

Today is the single most important day so far for the peace implementation force in Bosnia. Most of the actions stipulated under the Dayton peace agreement have been completed with surprising ease and good will: only one, the exchange of prisoners of war, is being delayed until the last moment. If, by midnight tonight, 30 days after the agreement came into effect, the prisoners are not released, then all three parties will be in breach of the agreement.

The other outstanding matter is 120 *mujahedin* - militant Muslim fighters from Islamic countries - in the Bihac area. Under the Dayton agreement, they should have left Bosnia by 13 January. Yesterday a British company of 100 troops and five Warrior fighting vehicles headed into the area to persuade the *mujahedin* to leave for Zagreb. The problem is where - and how - they will travel from there.

The four kilometre "zone of separation" straddling the ceasefire line and the new frontier between the Muslim/Croat and Serb entities within Bosnia has been cleared of troops and all the mined areas marked, as agreed. More than a thousand minefield records have been provided.

The implementation force, I-For, has moved to secure the

areas to be handed over under the agreement.

The biggest, 400 square miles, which I-For calls "the Anvil", is centred on Sipovo, where the British 4th Armoured Brigade has taken up residence. It is a sorry, bleak wilderness, occupied by I-For troops and the Bosnian Croat army. A few civilians remain, including the population of two Croat villages.

They lived, untroubled, under Bosnian Serb rule. In the summer, the Serbs were pushed out. By mid-March, they will have returned under the terms of the Dayton agreement. Brigadier Richard Dannatt, commanding 4th Brigade, is trying to persuade the Croats to stay, and they may well do so.

With its work cut out to ensure the Dayton terms are fulfilled, I-For has avoided being dragged into investigating the allegations of a mass grave of war-crime victims near Ljubija, south of Prijedor. That lies outside its mandate, but it is a delicate matter, as the Muslim-Croat side has demanded action, and I-For will report anything it hears.

Last night the British Chief of Defence Staff, Field Marshal Sir Peter Inge, arrived to see the biggest deployment of British forces for real since the Gulf war. More than 10,000 have now arrived and many of those are heading for the Anvil. Just before they reach the Anvil, they enter the assembly area at



Safety first: US troops in Bosnia at a crater caused by a mine-clearing tank hitting a road mine. Photograph: Reuters

Kupres, a bullet-spattered town on a windy, rock-strewn plain. For years it was out of bounds to the UN. Now dark green vehicles with "I-For" in white paint and inverted black Vs - the recognition symbol used in the Gulf - cruise the road freely.

Today Sir Peter will fly over the zone of separation in a helicopter and visit his troops at Sipovo. They have fanned out across the Anvil, and are also guarding key installations to

stop them being wrecked before the Serbs return. At Bocac they are guarding a hydro-electric dam which still provides power for Banja Luka, the Serb city to the north.

At Gorji Vakuf, the headquarters of the British-led south-west division, plans are afoot to move to Banja Luka. Gorji Vakuf was right on the front line during the war between Muslims and Croats but is now on the rim as the centre shifts westward to the Anvil.

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## international



Burning anger: Vietnamese refugees in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, torched their homes yesterday in protest at repatriation

Photograph: AP

# Iraq wants to talk about oil-for-food sale

MICHAEL SHERIDAN  
Diplomatic Editor

Iraq yesterday announced that as part of plans to create "a democratic atmosphere", its executions would no longer cut off criminals' ears. The government also told the United Nations it wanted to discuss a deal to sell \$2bn (£1.3bn) of oil to buy food and medicine for its people.

The two moves were seen by some diplomats at the UN as signs of compromise in an effort to relieve the suffering of Iraq's population five years after the allied air offensive in the Gulf war destroyed the infrastructure. Latest reports from aid workers in Iraq say UN sanc-

tions have since reduced most of its people to penury and hunger while President Saddam Hussein's clique remains in comfort and in power.

The Justice Minister, Shabib al-Malki, yesterday said Iraq had abolished or suspended laws prescribing punishments such as severing ears or branding the foreheads of criminals. The amputation of hands would also be stopped. "Several laws curbing the freedom of the citizens have been abolished in the light of instructions given by President Saddam Hussein for the prevalence of a democratic atmosphere in Iraq," the minister added.

The measures appeared to be a response to consistently scathing criticism of Iraq's human-rights record by Max van der Stoep, the special rapporteur, or investigator, appointed by the UN Human Rights Commission in Geneva. He had also criticised Iraq for refusing to alleviate the plight of its people by taking advantage of UN Security Council Resolution 986, which permits it to sell oil in exchange for humanitarian supplies purchased and delivered under UN observation. Under its provisions, Iraq could raise \$2bn for food and medicine every six months but could not use the money for weapons or soldiers' wages.

Up to now, Iraq had refused to accept the terms, claiming they amounted to an infringement of sovereignty. But the UN Secretary General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, was briefing diplomats in New York last night about new overtures from Iraq suggesting it might come to terms with a limited oil sale.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Tariq Aziz, has written to Mr Boutros-Ghali saying "we would be prepared to enter a dialogue with you provided that no conditions were placed upon us."

International oil markets wavered on the news of a possible Iraqi sale, which could push crude prices lower. Newspapers

in Baghdad reported this week that a delegation led by the head of Iraq's chambers of commerce, Zuhair Abd al-Ghaffur Yunis, had travelled to Egypt to discuss plans to import food-stuffs and medicines.

However, British and American diplomats at the UN are likely to lead moves for a tough line in the Security Council against any Iraqi effort to cut an oil-for-food deal outside the terms of Resolution 986. Mr Aziz recently insisted Iraq still found the resolution unacceptable, making it unlikely that countries such as Russia and France, which broadly favour the relaxation of sanctions, will be able to find much room to manoeuvre.

This week the press in neighbouring Jordan carried an intriguing item suggesting that life may be difficult for Mr Aziz himself in the "democratic atmosphere" of Baghdad.

According to the reports, security men recently refused to let Mr Aziz leave Iraq with his wife and children. Officials at the frontier between Iraq and Jordan contacted President Saddam's office, which ordered that Mr Aziz could travel alone but could not take his family. The Deputy Prime Minister returned to Baghdad.

Mr Aziz is a member of Iraq's Nestorian Christian minority and is fluent in English. He has functioned for years as a loyal interpreter to foreign diplomats of President Saddam's policies.

But even the strongest loyalties are being tested by five years of consistent military and economic pressure. An Iraqi military intelligence official, Colonel Shakir al-Juburi, is reported to have defected to Jordan after escaping from Iraq on a forged passport. He is the most senior intelligence officer to flee since the escape of Rafiq al-Samarrai, the former head of Iraqi military intelligence, who recently shared his experiences with viewers of a BBC television series on the Gulf war.

## Israelis turn Jerusalem into a foreign country

PATRICK COCKBURN  
Jerusalem

A rally by Palestinian candidates at the Israeli checkpoint on the Mount of Olives was the first political event of the day. We told the taxi-driver to take us there, explaining we were going to a political demonstration. Another passenger, wearing the skullcap of a religious Jew, misunderstood our intentions.

He asked if we were going to a demonstration of Israeli settlers, protesting against a Palestinian election taking place in Jerusalem. He said he was a leader of the youth section of the right-wing Likud party, "but I am under strict orders not to get involved in anything".

Introducing himself as Jeremy Stock, an immigrant from Australia now working in the Jewish Agency, he said he was against the withdrawal from the West Bank. "I was told by Bibi Netanyahu, the leader of Likud, to do nothing." It was a confirmation that the Israeli right will not dare disrupt the elections tomorrow. It is too nervous of reminding voters about its role in the upsurge of violence which culminated in the killing of Yitzhak Rabin.

As we dropped Mr Stock, he predicted trouble if the government started to compromise. A few minutes later, on the Mount of Olives, Hanan Ashrawi, the best-known independent standing for the Palestinian Council, was complaining about "Israel - sealing off Jerusalem from the West Bank. Standing near the barrier where troops check Palestinians entering from the east, she said: "Jerusalem is being strangled."

Israel has gone to bizarre lengths to emphasise the poll in Jerusalem is different. Ballot boxes are different from those on the West Bank and votes are to be counted in Ramallah, to give the impression that Palestinians in Jerusalem are postal voters living in a foreign land.

In Salahuddin Street, the main Palestinian commercial area, Majeda el-Batsh, sister of one of the candidates, Ahmed el-Batsh, had found a different way to campaign. She organised

supporters to hand out carnations with the candidate's picture. "The problem is there has been no election for 27 years and people have only a few weeks to campaign," she said.

Her brother, a former teacher who spent eight years in jail, is well known in the area and stands a good chance of winning one of the seven seats, though two are reserved for Christians. For many years a Fatah leader in Jerusalem, he is standing as an independent.

Yasser Arafat's decision to ignore many former Fatah militants and include other notables angered local Fatah leaders.



Yasser Arafat: Pre-election poll gives him 80% of vote

Some, like Mr Batsh, decided to stand anyway. This is hardly likely to damage Mr Arafat's chances of winning the presidency, though: a poll yesterday showed him winning 80 per cent of the vote.

Samira Halil, his only opponent, held an indoor rally in east Jerusalem this week which failed to attract a single Palestinian: the audience consisted of reporters and international election monitors.

Not everybody in Salahuddin street was enthusiastic about the election. A money-changer said: "I don't really care about all this. These candidates can promise to do things in the rest of the West Bank but not here. In Jerusalem not one of them can deliver a licence to build a house because the Israelis are still in complete control." Jeremy Stock would have been glad to hear it.

For your daily requirement of iron, you'd have to eat this much.

Ditto.

You need to eat a variety of foods to get all the iron you need each day. If you're a normal healthy person, a lean, grilled rump steak (170g) will supply you with half your daily requirement. To get the same amount from raw spinach, you'd have to eat 680g of it. That's because your body absorbs at least twice as much iron from red meat than from an equivalent weight of spinach. Red meat also helps you absorb more iron from other foods, including spinach.

So, unless you have a very big appetite for spinach, what better excuse do you need to enjoy a tender, juicy steak?

BRITISH  
MEAT

JPL 100 150



[illegible]

## obituaries/gazette

## N. T. Rama Rao

N. T. Rama Rao is best known in India for having abandoned his status as a film god to enter politics, and was three times voted chief minister of Andhra Pradesh, the state's highest elected office, most recently in 1994.

A popular screen actor from the south-eastern Indian state of Andhra Pradesh, "NTR" starred in over 320 Telugu-language films, usually as a mythological Hindu god or hero. Among the rural poor, he had a massive following. Many of his awed, illiterate followers blurred the distinction between god and actor, and following his death shrines have sprouted in some parts of Andhra Pradesh where Rama Rao is worshipped as one of Hinduism's many deities. At least one of his followers committed suicide on hearing news of his death.

A populist, he was born into a poor farming family at Nim-

makuru, in the state's Krishna district. Ambitious, handsome and graced with a booming baritone, he quit his lowly job in the civil service and entered films while in his twenties. From his first part, a walk-on as a police officer in *Mana Desam* (1949), for which he was paid 500 rupees (today about £10 sterling), he became one of the cinema-crazed state's best-known idols. Wide-shouldered, flamboyant and with a proud, hawkish face, Rama Rao made as good a villain as he did a hero, but he is best known for his portrayals of the two gods Krishna and Rama.

During the Sixties, his fame reached such a pitch that his fans would clash outside the theatres with gangs owing allegiance to rival film stars. One of his films during this period, *Shri Venkateswara Mahatmyam* (1960) evoked such reverence that Rama Rao's followers erected makeshift shrines inside the cinema halls to pray before and after the screening.

His last film paved his entry into politics. In *The Lion of Bobbili* (1982), Rama Rao plays an army officer who turns into an idealist fighting against the corrupt government. On his 60th birthday, while *The Lion of Bobbili* was still filling cinema halls across the state, Rama Rao launched a new political party, the Telugu Desam. Using cinema tricks, he travelled Andhra Pradesh campaigning from a makeshift van fitted with lights, a powerful public address system and a bed. In 90 days, he



A man of the masses: Rama Rao's popularity as an actor mesmerised voters when he launched a new political party in 1983

covered 35,000 kilometres, a feat he claimed was a world record. He said he owed this feat of endurance to yoga. The appearance of the state's most popular film idol so mesmerised voters in Andhra Pradesh, many of whom had never seen television or electricity, that Rama Rao's fledgling party, despite its political inexperience, won an overwhelming majority. Hundreds of thousands of supporters witnessed his swearing-in as chief minister.

During his three terms as chief minister, he proved as durable a politician as he had been an actor. His populist

schemes of selling rice for two rupees a kilo, building houses for the poor and reserving more university places for women may have nearly bankrupted the state treasury but did win him votes. He was one of the few opposition politicians to stand up against the often wrathful Indira Gandhi, then premier.

After the death of his first wife in 1984, Rama Rao's godly lustre faded. A high court found him guilty of corruption and nepotism and his party was thrashed in the 1989 assembly polls. His comeback in 1994 — with a new and far younger bride at his side, Lak-

shmi Parvathi, a teacher — was marred by family feuds. His numerous children hated their stepmother and her influence on the often sickly Rama Rao. He was ousted as chief minister last August by his own son-in-law, Chandrababu Naidu.

The prime minister, Narasimha Rao, described him as "a man of many parts — a learned and deeply religious person, a very fine and powerful actor who swayed millions of people, a forceful orator and above all, a man of the masses." Rama Rao was also chairman of the leftist National Front, an alliance of leftist and regional par-

ties. "What is destined to happen will happen. Victory and defeat are like light and darkness," he laughed on the day when his own family toppled him, in a drama that for many Indians was nearly as spellbinding as Rama Rao's performances as mythological hero.

Tim McGirk

Nandamuri Taraka Rama Rao, actor and politician: born Nimmakuru, India 29 March 1923; founder and first President, Telugu Desam Party 1982; Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh 1983-89, 1994-95; twice married; died Hyderabad 18 January 1996



Spellbinding: "NTR" in the film *Mahamantiri Timmarusu*, 1982

## Barbara Jordan

Barbara Jordan was the first African-American to be elected to either house of the United States Congress since the Reconstruction period immediately after the Civil War.

In 1976 she was the first black woman to be seriously considered as a Vice-Presidential candidate by the Democratic Party, and she twice gave the keynote address at Democratic national conventions, in 1976 and again in 1992.

Her greatest moment, however, came in 1974 as a member of the judiciary committee of the House of Representatives during the hearings on the possible impeachment of President Richard Nixon for the various excesses collectively known as "Watergate".

With quiet but passionate eloquence she stirred her colleagues and the national television audience to share her stern conception of the committee's duty. Her fellow

Democrats had been held back from pressing impeachment by fear of appearing partisan. Her intervention is reckoned to have been decisive in persuading the committee to recommend that impeachment proceedings should go forward.

When the Constitution was signed, Jordan said, she, as a black woman, was not included. "I felt somehow," she said wryly, "that George Washington and Alexander Hamilton just left me out by mistake." But, through the process of amendment, interpretation and court decision she was finally one of "We the people". "Today," she said, "I am an inquisitor, and I believe it would not... overstate the solemnity that I feel right now to say my faith in the Constitution is whole, it is total, and I am not going to sit here and be an idle spectator to the diminution, the destruction of the Constitution."

"As if speaking from tablets

of stone," as her fellow Democrat Senator Lloyd Bentsen recalled, in her strong voice with a Texas accent clipped for effect, she concluded with a peroration that exactly expressed what tens of millions of Americans felt. "If the impeachment provision in the Constitution will not reach the offences charged here, then perhaps that 18th-century Constitution should be abandoned to a 20th-century paper shredder."

In 1976 she featured on a longish list of people who were being considered as possible Vice-Presidential candidates by Jimmy Carter and his advisers before she gave her keynote speech at the Democratic convention. Polls at that point showed that her presence on the ticket would lose Carter more votes than she would bring to him. When she spoke, however, her "rolling rhetoric," as one reporter put it, aroused huge enthusiasm in the audience. A ma-



Jordan: "rolling rhetoric"

jestic, tall black woman in a green dress, her father had been a Baptist minister, and she spoke with the "exacting cadences of generations of southern black preachers."

She ended by quoting Abraham Lincoln: "As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master. This expresses my idea of democracy." That sentiment,

and her magnificent presence and delivery, touched off renewed calls for her to run with Carter, but it was not to be.

When Senator Walter Mondale was chosen instead, she campaigned actively for Carter and worked successfully with Jesse Jackson and other black leaders to register large numbers of new black voters. The next year, however, she surprised political Washington by announcing that she would stand down from Congress and go home to Texas after only three two-year terms. "The longer you stay in Congress," she explained, "the harder it is to leave. I didn't want to wake up one fine sunny morning and say 'this is nothing else that Barbara Jordan can do.'"

From 1979 she taught at the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas in Austin, where she was immensely popular with students. In 1992 she again gave

the keynote speech at the Democratic convention and again she struck the right note, this time a call for reconciliation.

"We need to change the decaying inner cities from decay to places where hope lies," she said. "We must be prepared to answer Rodney King's haunting question, 'Can we get along?' (King was a black motorist whose beating by the police, captured on videotape, set off the 1992 Los Angeles riots.)" "I say we answer that question with a resounding 'yes'."

Colin Hodgson

Barbara Charline Jordan, politician: born Houston, Texas 21 February 1936; Member (Democrat), Texas Senate 1966-72; Member, House of Representatives 1973-78; Lyndon B. Johnson Public Service Professor, University of Texas, Austin 1979-82; Lyndon B. Johnson Centennial Chair in National Policy 1982-96; died 17 January 1996

## Samuel Rosenberg

The death (though not yet the resurrection) of Samuel Rosenberg has occurred in New York. He was 85.

The presence of Friedrich Nietzsche at the Reichenbach Falls in 1877 was the premise for Rosenberg's theory that Sir Arthur Conan Doyle based the character of Professor Moriarty on the German philosopher and that Doyle's detective stories were the "pre-Freudian psycho-dramatic confessions" of a "self-revealing allegorist".

His findings were published

in 1974 by Bobbs Merrill (or Bobbs Merrill as he referred to them). The book, *Naked is the Best Disguise: the death and resurrection of Sherlock Holmes*, enjoyed great success in America (where it sold over 25,000 copies in hardback and was on the "Book-of-the-Month" list for several months), and there was success of a different sort in England where Desmond Elliott of Arlington Books was forced to reprint more than a thousand copies to the delight of bemused Sherlockians, who were

able to purchase them for as little as 50p a copy. Although never an invested Baker Street Irregular and often scornful of "orthodox Sherlockian ducks" and "Baker-streetniks", he contributed an expanded version of a chapter of his book to *Beyond Baker Street* (1976), gave several lectures on the "Conan Doyle syndrome", and wrote introductions to facsimile editions of *The Hound of the Baskervilles* and *The Return of Sherlock Holmes* published in 1975.

He was born in Cleveland and was an omnivorous reader (omnivorous in more senses than one — his friend Buckminster Fuller described the 6ft 3in, 21-stone Rosenberg as "history's most massive reader"). He first came to New York in the 1930s, when he worked in the theatre. During the Second World War he was employed as a photo-analyst for the Office of Strategic Services and afterwards served as an official photographer at the birth of the United Nations. In the 1960s he

found his true calling as a literary consultant for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, by whom he was engaged on account of his prodigious memory to check for plagiarism (a talent which led him to suggest, among other things, that Conan Doyle may have lifted sample sentences from translations made after his death of the works of German philosophers he had not read).

His other essays and studies concentrated on characters such as Frankenstein (the subject of an article in *Life* magazine in

1968), Herman Melville, St. Nicholas, Perseus, Dr. Albert Schweitzer, Lot's wife, James Joyce, Medusa, and Sigmund Freud, but it is for his book on Sherlock Holmes — which was not so much "resurrection" as "deconstruction" — that he will be best remembered.

Richard Lancelyn Green

Samuel Rosenberg, writer: born Cleveland, Ohio 1910; married Angela Nizandini (one daughter); died New York 5 January 1996

## Pregnancy claim after vasectomy struck out

## LAW REPORT

19 January 1996

Goodwill v British Pregnancy Advisory Service; Court of Appeal (Lord Justice Peter Gibson, Lord Justice Thorpe); 17 January 1996

A doctor who advised a man, following a vasectomy, that the operation was successful and no contraception needed to be used to avoid pregnancy, did not owe a duty of care to the man's future sexual partner who was told of the advice, became pregnant and claimed financial loss.

The Court of Appeal allowed an appeal by the defendant, BPAS, and struck out the plaintiff's claim.

In 1988 the plaintiff, a 40-year-old teacher who was divorced and had one son, commenced a sexual relationship with a man who informed her that he had had a successful vasectomy in 1984 arranged by BPAS who had advised him, after semen tests in 1985, that he no longer needed to use any method of contraception. The plaintiff consulted her own GP who told her that there was a minute chance of getting pregnant. She ceased to use a contraceptive coil. In 1989 the vasectomy underwent spontaneous reversal. The plaintiff became pregnant and she gave birth to a daughter.

The plaintiff brought pro-

ceedings against BPAS alleging that it was in breach of its duty of care to her in failing to warn the man of the possibility of spontaneous reversal and to advise the use of contraceptive protection. She claimed damages for financial loss. Judge Paul Clark refused BPAS's application to strike out the claim.

Roger Stewart (Reynolds Porter Chambers) for BPAS; Cherie Booth QC (Linnell) for the plaintiff.

Lord Justice Peter Gibson said that the doctor who performed a vasectomy on a man could not realistically be described as employed to confer a benefit on the man's sexual partners in the form of avoiding pregnancy. Still less could he be so described when he was giving advice on tests after the operation.

For the plaintiff to have a sustainable case in negligence for financial loss arising from reliance on advice given by BPAS, there must be a proximity or relationship between the giver of the advice and the person who acted on it.

How BPAS knew or should have known that its advice

would be communicated to the plaintiff and relied on by her as a warranty of permanent infertility when she did not commence the sexual relationship until three years later was not apparent. It was not pleaded that BPAS expected communication of its advice to the man's sexual partners nor that BPAS was alerted that the advice would be passed on to sexual partners.

It was not alleged nor could it reasonably be alleged that BPAS knew that its advice when communicated to the plaintiff was likely to be acted on by her without independent inquiry. BPAS could know nothing about the likely course of action of future partners.

BPAS was not in a sufficient or any special relationship with the plaintiff such as gave rise to a duty of care. It could not properly be said that BPAS voluntarily assumed responsibility to the plaintiff when giving advice to the man. At that time, she was not an existing partner but was merely, like any other woman in the world, a potential future sexual partner of his, that is a member of an indeterminate large class of

females who might have sexual relations with the man during his lifetime.

It was impossible to believe that the policy of the law was or should be to treat so tenuous a relationship between the adviser and the addressee as giving rise to a duty of care.

It was beyond belief that in ceasing to use any contraceptive method, the plaintiff was induced by and relied on the man's bare assertion to her that he had had a vasectomy and could not have any children, given that she only removed her contraceptive coil after taking advice from her GP. She took the risk that there was a small possibility of pregnancy.

The plaintiff's claim would be struck out.

Lord Justice Thorpe, concurring, said that the plaintiff was no nearer the doctor adviser than one who some three and half years after the operation commenced a sexual relationship with his patient. The class to which the plaintiff belonged was potentially excessive in size and uncertain in character. The adviser's state of knowledge militated against the plaintiff. Finally the plaintiff failed the test of reliance.

Ying Hui Tan, Barrister

## Births, Marriages &amp; Deaths

## DEATHS

BATE: On 5 January, in hospital. Reginald Francis Bate, (Reg), aged 73 years. Funeral service, St Peter's Church, Ealing, 29 January at 11.30am. Please, no flowers, but donations instead to John Groom's of Injured Jockeys Fund. All enquiries to P Ryan and Daughter, telephone 0181-567 1064.

FELLOWS: Howard Alyn, of Sproughton, (pewit), and formerly of Felstead, on 14 January 1996, suddenly but peacefully whilst on holiday. Husband of the late Doreen and of Margaret, father of William, David, Nicholas and Andrew. A much-loved and devoted husband, father, step-father and grandfather who will be sadly missed. Funeral arrangements to be announced later.

RASCHID: Fatima (Daw Thoun Mary), aged 83, in Quince, Pennsylvania, on Tuesday 16 January. Beloved wife of the late Burmese Muslim leader U Raschid. Indefatigable champion of the poor, the sick and the oppressed. President of the National Council of Women in Burma. Mother of Mr Bilal Raschid, architect of McLean, Virginia, and Dr Salman Raschid, psychiatrist, of Hampstead, London. Greatly adored mother, grandmother and great-grandmother. The funeral (funeral) will take place, God willing, in Karachi, Pakistan — where she will be laid to rest beside her husband. Rahmanullah al-Bukhari may the mercy of God be upon them. For further information contact Mrs Rose Raschid (Daw Tin Tin San) at the Burmese Section, BBC World Service, 011-257 2545.

For Gazette, please telephone 0171-293 2011 or fax 0171-293 2010.

## Birthdays

Mr Desi Arnez Jar, actor, 43; Mr Peter Atkinson MP, 53; Miss Nina Bowden, novelist, 71; Mr Dewey Bunnell, rock musician, 45; The Earl of Carnarvon, honorary racing manager to the Queen, 72; Sir Jonathan Clarke, former circuit judge, 66; Mr Michael Crawford, actor and singer, 54; Mr Bernard Dunstan, painter, 76; Mr Stefan Edberg, tennis player, 30; Mr Rod Evans, rock singer, 51; Mr Paul Evers, rock singer, 57; Mr Walter Goldsmith, chairman, Betterware, 58; Mr William Hayden, former chairman and chief executive, Jaguar, 67; Mr Hans Hotter, bass baritone, 87; Sir Alex Jarvis, former chairman, Smiths Industries, 72; Mr Richard Lester, film director, 64; Brigadier Helen Mechie, former director of the WRAC, 58; Mr David Newbwing, chairman, Ivory & Sime, 62; Mr Nigel Nicholson, former MP and author, 79; Mr Robert Palmer, rock singer and guitarist, 47; Miss Dolly Parton, country music singer, 50; Sir Javier Perez de Cuellar, former Secretary-General of the UN, 76; Mr Bryan Pringle, actor, 61; Sir Simon Rattle, conductor, 41; Mr Charles Smith, managing director, Chevron UK, 66; Sir John Stanley MP, 54; Mr Dennis Taylor, snooker player, 47; Mr Gary Titley MEP, 46; Mr David Tredennick MP, 46; The Earl of Wessex and March, former president, National Trust for Scotland, 84.

## Anniversaries

Birbs: James Watt, inventor of the modern condensing steam engine, 1766; Edgar Allan Poe, author and poet, 1809; Paul Cézanne, painter, 1839; Deaths: William Congreve, playwright, 1729; Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, journalist and socialist,

1865; Augusto-Ferdinand François Mariette, Egyptologist, 1881. On this day: King Edward III established the Order of the Garter, 1348; an explosion occurred at Woolwich Arsenal, the East London munitions factory, with 450 casualties, 1917; Indira Gandhi became prime minister of India, 1966. Today is the Feast Day of Saints Abachum and Audulf, St Albert of Castel, St Cennus IV of Denmark, St Charles of Sezze, St Filan or Folan, St Germanicus, St Henry of Uppsala, Saints Maritus and Martha, St Messalina, St Nethalan and St Wulfstan.

## Lord O'Brien of Lothbury

A service of thanksgiving for the life of Lord O'Brien of Lothbury GBE PC FRSC will be held in the Chapel of the Order of the British Empire, the Crypt, St Paul's Cathedral, London EC4, at 11.30am on Thursday 14 March. Those attending are requested to take their seats by 11.15am. For further information, please contact the Assistant Secretary, Bank of England.

## Dr H. K. Prescott

A service of thanksgiving for the life of Kelsall Prescott will be held on Friday 23 February in Eton College Chapel at 2.45pm.

## Derek and Gwen Kimber

A Thanksgiving Service for Derek Kimber OBE and Gwen Kimber will be held on Friday 9 February 1996 at St Michael Paternoster Royal, College Street, London EC4, at 12 noon.

## Luncheons

Foreign and Commonwealth Office: Mr Malcolm Rifkind QC MP, Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, held a luncheon yesterday at 1 Carlton Gardens, London SW1, in honour of Mr Ali Alatas, the Indonesian Foreign Minister.

## Dinners

HM Government: Mr Ian Lang MP, President of the Board of Trade, was the host at a dinner held yesterday at Lancaster House, London SW1, in honour of Mr Ali Alatas, Indonesian Foreign Minister.

## Synagogue services

Details of synagogue services to be held tomorrow may be obtained by telephoning the following. Sabbath begins in London at 4.12pm. United Synagogue: 0171-387 4300. Federation of Synagogues: 0181-262 2263. Union of Liberal and Progressive Synagogues: 0171-590 1663. Reform Synagogue of Great Britain: 0181-349 4731. Spanish and Portuguese Jews Congregation: 0171-289 2573. New London Synagogue (Masorti): 0171-328 1026.

## ROYAL ENGAGEMENTS

Prince Edward, Chairman, International Council, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award International Association, visits Castles College to meet Ombudsman and Justice of the Peace, County Mayo, Ireland, and as Chairman, International Council, the Duke of Edinburgh's Award International Association, attends a Gala reception and luncheon at Ashford Castle, County Mayo, Ireland. The Princess Royal visits the Republic of Ireland.

## Changing of the Guard

The Household Cavalry Mounted Regiment means the Queen's Life Guard at Horse Guards, 1 Jan.

Dr. H. K. Prescott



Stakeholding is this week's buzzword. Is it really a departure, or just a new recipe for old ingredients, asks **Yvette Cooper**

**Q: Why is everyone suddenly so obsessed with "stakeholding?"** Because 10 days ago Labour leader Tony Blair launched it as his Big Idea. Addressing businessmen in Singapore, he said: "The economics of the centre and centre left today should be geared to the creation of the stakeholder economy, which involves all our people, not a privileged few."

Labour's spin doctors announced that stakeholding would be the theme for the general election campaign. Conservative Central Office launched a counter-attack. Last night in Derby, Blair made another speech about it and further announcements are planned in coming months.

**Q: So what does it mean?** That's the problem; no one is quite sure.

**Q: Well Blair must be clear about it.** He says so, but most people are still puzzled. Blair said it was a unifying theme for Labour policies, many of them already well known. Gordon Brown, the Shadow Chancellor, says it's about giving people opportunities to work and to get training. Majorie Mowlam, Labour's Northern Ireland spokeswoman, said stakeholding just meant an economy based around "people".

**Q: It sounds very vague. Is there any meat?** Yes. There are lots of specific ideas and policies about the economy, the way that companies run, the way the welfare state operates and our role

as citizens and consumers. All these ideas can lay claim to the term "stakeholding".

**Q: Where did it all start?** The *Oxford English Dictionary* doesn't shed much light on the origins of stakeholding. It describes a stakeholder as a bookmaker – "an independent party with whom each of those who makes a wager deposits the money". A more evocative image of a stakeholder is one of the brave New World settlers, staking out their territory and building new lives. Having a stake means owning something and being able to decide what to do with it.

The term has become fashionable recently partly because the term "stakeholder capitalism" was popularised by Will Hutton, the *Guardian's* assistant editor, in his best selling book *The State We're In*. Other exponents of similar ideas include John Kay, chairman of London Economics, and Charles Handy, the management guru, who have applied the idea to the way companies work. They say successful companies do not just serve their shareholders, but they also look after everyone who has a stake in the company's success: workers, managers, customers and suppliers as well as shareholders.

**Q: So Blair pinched the idea from management books?** No Blair's version of stakeholding includes ideas picked from all over the place, and he has been mulling

over it for a long time. In his leadership manifesto 18 months ago he lamented that social cohesion and a sense of responsibility was undermined when millions did not have a stake in society.

Blair is using the stakeholding as a phrase – not a catchy one – to sum up these ideas. The first is that government policy must be aimed at giving everyone opportunities to work, to learn, to train and to improve themselves. That gives them a stake in society. The second theme is that, in return, people must take more responsibility for themselves. Stakeholding is meant to encourage people to stand on their own two feet. It is not meant to be a recipe for more state intervention.

In Sin-

gapore Blair said: "If people feel they have no stake in society, they feel little responsibility towards it and little inclination to work for it's success."

**Q: It still sounds very waffly, what does it mean in practice? What would stakeholding mean for the economy?**

The first thing Blair means by it, is tackling unemployment: giving people a stake in the economy, on this count, basically means giving them a job. And Labour has a long list of

policies for the long-term unemployed and the young unemployed, ranging from new training to subsidies to private employers that take them on. If Labour's policies could really achieve all they promise, a stakeholder economy would be one in which no young person remained without training or work – and hence without a stake – for more than six months.

**Q: Jobs. Is that all? What about giving people a greater stake in the company that employs them?** Stakeholding can mean anything from good communication to sharing the financial spoils through employee share-ownership schemes or workers councils, depending on how radical you are. John Lewis, the retailer, is probably the best known model of a what a pure "stakeholder" company might be like: it's a partnership that is largely owned by its employees. And there are smaller firms such as Baxi, the boiler manufacturers, in which 100 per cent of shares are owned by employees.

Labour doesn't want all companies to be like this, but it does want them to involve more of their workers through share ownership. Yesterday, for example, Alistair Darling, Labour's City spokesman, was promoting Employee Share Ownership Plans. Labour is looking at how employees might exert more influence over their investments in companies through pension funds, by making the funds account more openly for the decisions they make.

**Q: Will companies be forced to do this sort of thing?**

Unlikely. Blair made clear in his Singapore speech that much of the responsibility for change lies with the companies themselves: "We cannot by legislation guarantee that a company will behave in a way conducive to trust and long-term commitment. But it is surely time to assess how we shift the emphasis in corporate ethos... towards a vision

of the company as a community"

**Q: Sounds fine, but surely it will just let the Trade Unions in through the back door?**

Some union leaders might see it that way and in the past week the Conservatives have alleged that stakeholding is just a disguise for a return to corporatism. Dr Brian Mawhinney, the Conservative Party chairman, described it as "a deal under which Labour's old friends in the trade union movement would get back all the power and privileges they abused in the Seventies". Blair and Brown deny this. Brown said this week: "A stakeholder Britain is not a statist Britain... Tony Blair and I have made it absolutely clear that we will not go back to the old corporatist agenda." The new stakeholders that Labour wants to appeal to are individuals rather than institutions.

**Q: Is the idea confined to the economy and business?** Far from it. If anything, the most detailed policy proposals that Blair includes in the stakeholder theme are about the reform of the welfare state and education. Next month he will make a speech about what stakeholding will mean for people's political rights. The clearest example of a stakeholding Labour policy is the idea of an "individual learning account", shortly to be outlined by Education spokesman David Blunkett. The account would be a way of showing people, perhaps through vouchers to spend on training, what each individual was entitled to in adult education. This would allow them more choice over where and when to learn. The Labour idea is that this would give people more of a sense of ownership over their education, rather than passively consuming whatever the state provides.

**Q: What would a stakeholder welfare state look like?** Labour's Social Security spokesman Chris Smith is reported to be considering some radical ideas drawn from the Far East. At its most waffly this could mean people feeling more attached to the welfare state in the way they feel proud of the NHS. But

there is a hard edge to the idea. It is that if people claim benefits, they must give something back to society. Labour accepts that long-term dependence on benefits is demoralising and self-perpetuating. It wants to use the benefits system to encourage people to become more self-reliant. So, for instance, unemployed people below the age of 25 would be offered several options for work and training if they were to continue getting benefits. If they turned these down, benefits would be cut.

Another idea is about pensions. Some Labour modernisers believe that the state should legislate to encourage people to save to cover periods of unemployment and provide for their old age. The general principle is that the state should encourage individuals to make the right choices about their pensions and their education, rather than to step in to do the job for them.

**Q: What about our stake in the political system?** Blair has said little about this, although he intends to make a speech on stakeholding and constitutional reform next month. Giving everyone a real political stake means allowing people to participate more directly in political decision-making: it could mean anything from greater regional democracy to more referendums.

**Q: So does stakeholding amount to a new departure or is just a way of dressing up existing policies?** Most of the ideas Blair is talking about using the stakeholder idea are very familiar. He hopes stakeholding will provide more coherence to existing themes and policies. The concept of "stakeholding" alone fails to answer the important questions about whether Labour is fit to govern. Will Labour reform the welfare state and restrain public spending? Will it deliver on its low tax pledges? Does it really believe in the market and how much will it use the state to intervene? The terminology of stakeholding doesn't help us answer any of these questions, it is largely just a different way of discussing them.



## Darcy was in denial, OK?

Jane Austen, according to the movie magazine *Premiere*, is now seen in Hollywood as the 19th-century equivalent of Quentin Tarantino. Presumably, they envisage such magic moments as Darcy resplendent in sunglasses and zoot suit telling Elizabeth: "Your mother is lacking in wit. I shall with your permission waste the bitch."

Hollywood film-makers are,

McGrath offers a novel reasoning for Americans colonising Austen on film. "The people of Woody Allen and Jane Austen are not so far apart," he says. "They are all elite, comfortable people, socially conscious and representing the wit of the time rather than the action. You don't have to have read Jane Austen to understand the social habits. The story is all about life."

Emma as a Woody Allen film? Well, Mr Knightley is a lot older than Emma. He thought he had a lot to teach her, yet



Gwyneth Paltrow: star in an, ex, Woody Allen-style Emma

it seems, falling over each other to adapt the Austen oeuvre. The blonde American starlet Gwyneth Paltrow is soon to star as the brunette, English Emma, directed by Douglas McGrath, co-writer of the Woody Allen film *Bullets Over Broadway*.

underneath he is a little unsure of himself. And the country dancing scenes could always be modified to a jazz quintet. But the McGrath film might yet hit a major snag. There is no record of Mr Knightley going into analysis.

## Heroes only

A question. Who are "Saxon-Norman thugs"? Why, the Government, of course, according to the *Four Weddings and a Funeral* actor Kenneth Griffith, who will be in Cardiff tonight to address a Sinn Féin rally. "As a Welsh democrat I am going to Cardiff to state very firmly that Britain is entirely in the wrong and Sinn Féin is entirely in the right," he tells me earnestly.

Griffith, whose cameo in *Four Weddings* is in the cast list as "mad old man", has asked Gerry Adams in advance of tonight's meeting if he can join Sinn Féin. Adams told him: "You don't have to join. You are already a member of the Republican family."

As a director, Griffith claims "only to make films about heroes". His Sixties film *Hang On Your Brightest Colour*, about the IRA's founding father, Michael Collins, was banned for 21 years. As well as Collins, his heroes' gallery includes the unlikely gathering of Thomas Paine, Nehru and Zola Budd.

## That figures

Peter Bruinvels, the diminutive former MP for Leicester, who once notoriously volunteered to be the public hangman, has already shot himself in the foot in his new role as Conservative parliamentary candidate for the Wrekin.

Yesterday he delivered his

11th press release of the year, on the subject of local unemployment, which he said had fallen. "This latest drop in unemployment figures is good news for the people of Wrekin, employers and employees alike, for the county of Shropshire and for the country," he maintained on local radio.

Listeners at the Central Office of Information, however, were mystified. Unemployment figures for the Wrekin have actually gone up, no matter how many ways you slice the area up.

"The figures have risen from 3,622 in November to 3,654 now," a spokesman said yesterday. "We found what Bruinvels had to say most amusing."

The man himself sticks by his calculations. "I am not wrong," he maintained with supreme confidence.

## Noakes poke

Shep, the trusted companion of John Noakes, the former *Blue Peter* presenter, may have barked his last some years back, but his master is suddenly active on all fronts. Not only has Noakes at the age of 62 recorded his first single, "Sheep Dip Disco", which features his tender rebuke to the late sheepdog, "Get down, Shep!" – he has also signed up for the Government and is fronting an advertising campaign for the DTT's "Smart" competition, which awards money to small businesses to help produce innovative product ideas.



Go with Noakes: he's cheap

Here, I have to tell him, he may have been fleeced. A DTT spokesman cheerily confided to me: "We paid John less than the going rate."

## Page 31 girls

How to insult a girl without really trying: the *Daily Express* flagged on its front page yesterday: "Your Practical Guide to Plastic Surgery", page 31. Turn to page 31 and there is a full-page spread on Channel 4's *The Girlie Show* with a glamorous photograph of its three stars, one of whom is holding up her blouse to draw attention to her bosom.

This, I respectfully assume, is not the practical guide to plastic surgery, which in fact turns up elsewhere in the paper.

Can a girl sue because of a faulty cross-reference? Case law is silent on this.

Eagle Eye

## Generation Why

by Tony Reeve and Steve Way



## IT'S ALWAYS MORE COMPLICATED THAN YOU THINK... ALL THIS HASSLE... ARE WE DOING THE RIGHT THING? I MEAN...



## NOT GOING THROUGH NEWBURY WOULD KNOW A COUPLE OF HOURS OFF OUR ANNUAL PILGRIMAGE TO STONEHENGE...





# THE INDEPENDENT

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## Old ghosts Blair must lay to rest

Tony Blair is trying hard to make voters feel safe. Last night in a speech in Derby he addressed the deep insecurities that people across all classes feel about losing their jobs, poverty in old age and crime. The balm he offered was his "stakeholder economy", which he summed up as "a strong cohesive society in which the individual can thrive".

It was a short, vague speech that offered little detail. Mr Blair's alleged big idea has a warm, reassuring feel, this notion that everyone should be included and given opportunities. The trouble is that it also provokes insecurities of an entirely different kind. Those worries are that this talk of stakeholding merely disguises old-fashioned Labour policies and that it will be used by the trade unions to get back some of the powers they lost in the 1980s.

Mr Blair needs to dispel those doubts if the message of "stakeholding" – however vague and convoluted – is to get through to the average, middle-income voters he wants to woo. It was their swing to Margaret Thatcher that put the Tories into power, and it is their disillusionment with the Conservatives today that could let Mr Blair into Downing Street.

Many of these voters, particularly in the south, were won over by Thatcherism's message of competition and the survival of the fittest, the offer of choice and the call to rely more on themselves and less on the state. In the Nineties that dream has turned sour. Managers, bank workers, professionals – they have all felt the chill of redundancies. House prices plunged. The middle classes have become fearful.

So today everyone – even the Labour party – may accept that the rigours of global competition are inescapable, even desirable. We cannot turn the clock back

via nationalisation or protectionism. But this creed of the Eighties is no longer enough. People want to know there is a way to recover if they become casualties of change. They want to be able to pick themselves up, dust themselves down, learn a new skill.

Mr Blair is offering some answers. For example, yesterday he spoke of "individual learning accounts", a sum which people could save with the state's help but then choose themselves how to spend on their own training. Individual ownership – be it of training or pensions – rather than state paternalism, seems to be the healthy direction of Mr Blair's thinking.

But he has not fully realised how his party still scares those he wants to reassure. Those middle-class voters he cultivates are easily frightened that Labour favours old-style Seventies corporatism and a resurgence of union power.

These fears were dismissed last night. Mr Blair declared that the stakeholder economy "is not about giving power to corporations or unions or interest groups. It is about giving power to you, the individual."

He may be sincere in his protestations. But his supporters are less convincing. This week, Michael Meacher, Labour's employment spokesman, talked about "social and economic partnerships", which sounded suspiciously like the old-style corporatism that smothered enterprise. John Monks, the TUC leader, thinks stakeholding will underpin union collective bargaining. Mr Blair heads a party in which many have yet to be converted to Blairism. Only when voters are convinced that New Labour has completely buried its past, will Mr Blair be able adequately to address middle-class insecurity. And that is the key to the general election.

## Mr Robinson's Forte flutter

Gerry Robinson, chief executive of the Granada Group, has a nose for trouble. Eighteen months ago he won control of London Weekend Television, ousting the popular chief executive Greg Dyke and freeing up an unwilling Sir Christopher Bland for an eventual role as the next chairman of the BBC. Both the bid and the way it was conducted left a nasty taste in many mouths. People wanted to know why a successful management team was dumped by institutional investors who could not be sure of the consequences.

Today Mr Robinson is locked in the final stages of a battle for the Forte Group, with its chief executive Sir Rocco Forte resisting Granada's claims that Forte is a badly managed "sleeping giant" that only Granada's managerial kiss can fully awake.

Sir Rocco's friends and supporters retort that Granada's bid will leave it burdened with nearly £4bn of debt, and it will be forced to sell off the best parts of a business that has been painstakingly assembled over the years. The bid is little more than an asset-stripping operation, launched by a management with a successful but short track record.

Forte, by contrast, is a name to conjure with. Many who respect the achievement of Sir Rocco's father, a poor Glaswegian who pulled himself up from nothing, are appalled by the way this could be dismantled on the say-so of one or two large pension-fund managers. By next Tuesday we will know who has finally prevailed.

There is little room for sentiment in the City. Indeed, Charles Forte himself exploited this in the past. His business grew most prodigiously through its takeover of Trusthouse in the Sixties. Then most of the charges being levelled at Mr Robinson today were aimed at the Fortes: they were the new arrivals intent on taking over a venerable company.

There is no public interest at stake in this bid. Even though service-sector companies are far more important than they were to the economy, Forte does not rank as a national asset. It has lost the support of the City in recent years because its family management responded too slowly to calls for higher returns.

However, none of this means the bid reflects well on Granada, or the City itself where advisers, PR men and merchant bankers have been raking in huge fees. Did the pension funds who are selling out to Granada do as much as they could to pressurise Forte to change more quickly? It seems unlikely.

But the man who really has to worry is Mr Robinson. His strategy has twisted and turned as the bid has progressed. Granada will be very highly geared and, as a result, very vulnerable if he should win. Mr Robinson may well have overplayed his hand and offered over the odds for Forte in a show of managerial machismo.

If that is so, he will probably pay for his overambition at the hands of his own shareholders and the entire bid will have been a fiasco.

## Fergie's pounds lighter after our lunch

People who don't know that I write for the Independent sometimes ask me what I do for a living. I don't mind that.

Unfortunately, some people who do know that I write for the Independent also ask me what I do for a living. What they actually say is, "Surely it doesn't take you all day to write one small column?"

And they are quite right. I have another job which is entirely separate from my newspaper work. I spend a lot of my time as independent financial adviser to the Duchess of York.

When she first came to me, I have to admit the case looked hopeless. She wanted to know how to make savings, how to make ends meet and how to balance budgets – in brief, she wanted to know how to turn over a new leaf and be a new slimmer, budget-conscious Fergie.

"Forget it," I told her. "Scrimping and saving never helped anyone. What you need is a plan. A big plan. A master plan."

"What kind of master plan?" she asked, staring up in rather pathetic awe at the masterful pair of accountant's spectacles I had bought specially for the occasion.

"You are not spending enough," I told her. "You must either spend a lot



MILES KINGSTON

less – which is dreary in the extreme – or a lot, lot more, which is fun."

"But if I spend more, I shall go bankrupt!" she said.

"I smiled in a tiresomely knowledgeable sort of way. 'All the best people are on the verge of bankruptcy,' I said. 'The United Nations is hopelessly in debt. The Tory party is millions in debt. Imelda Marcos is desperately in debt. The United States of America is desperately in debt. Are any of them going out of business? I think not. Are they doing rather well? I think so.'"

"Well, what should I do?"

"Where?"

"Somewhere in the Caribbean?" I suggested.

Her eyes brightened. I was obviously her sort of financial adviser. But I have often found that it is hardly worth taking a client out to lunch if

you have only the lunch bill to show the tax people for it. Lunch in St Kitts, £60; transport from office to lunch and back, £600, that's my kind of expenses claim.

"So what I suggest is this," I said to her, as we toyed with our shark steaks in the poshest restaurant in Roseau, unassuming capital of the island of Dominica, which lies enticingly between the French islands of Martinique and Guadeloupe. "I suggest that you embark on a mammoth spending spree."

"It sounds wonderful," she said. "But won't I end up a hostage to the media? To my mother-in-law? To the Duke of York? To shoe shops everywhere? To you?"

"On the contrary," I said. "They will all be hostages to you. A person who owes more than £1m cannot be touched."

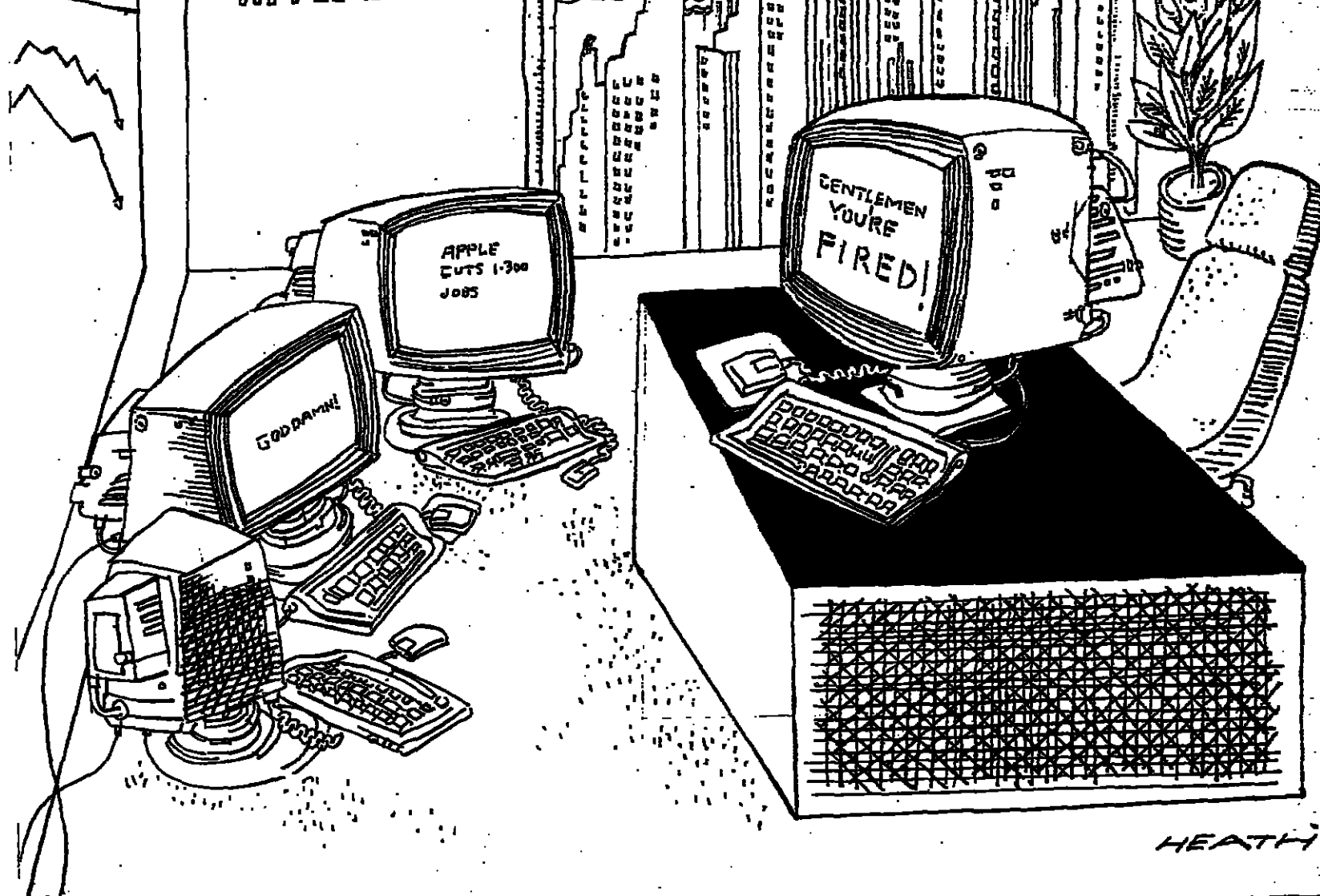
"They will try to bring me down," she said.

"They tried to bring Saddam Hussein down," I said. "The whole world has inflicted sanctions on Saddam Hussein to drive him penniless out of office. He is unmoved. He is stronger than ever."

"Are you trying to tell me that it is safer to owe money than to possess it?" she said, looking for the comforting truth in my enigmatic grey eyes.

APPLE N.Y.

SALES



HEATH

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Al-Masari's Islamic beliefs, values and goals

From Professor Mohammed al-Masari

Sir: In her attempt to prove me a "viper" whom feminists and atheists like her can "tolerate" only through "gritted teeth", Polly Toynbee distorts my views, my character, misquotes and quotes out of context my remarks and thus misleads your readers ("Why Mr Masari is good for us", 18 January).

She shows me apparently admiring Khomeini – whom I admire only in as much as he mobilised 5 million people against the dictatorship – while I made abundantly clear to her that we oppose Khomeinism as a methodology and would never replicate his theocracy in our own country.

In an apparent picture of a rake's progress, she distorts my own family life in an most insulting way, for example accusing me of "creating" single-parent families around the globe. The truth is that my wives already had children when I married them; before I had children of my own. As for the rest of her anti-Islamic prejudices – a shockingly acceptable form of racism among some Western liberals – our organisation is unashamedly Islamic and it follows that we wish to see an Islamic system of law in Arabia.

But I am fighting for an elected and accountable government in Arabia – chosen by men and women – which will make the laws of the country, which will be implemented by an independent judiciary and will be criticised by a free press, free labour unions and free associations.

The regime I fight by fax and by telephone is accountable to no one, elected by no one, loots its own country's wealth and implements its twisted arbitrary and repressive version of Sharia law without legal basis or moral legitimacy. Which should British liberals and progressives prefer? Yours sincerely, MOHAMMED AL-MASARI London, SW1 18 January

From Ms Zarina Choudry Sir: Mohammed al-Masari is incorrect in stating that "Muslim women must submit to sex with their husbands at any time, in any manner". Oral and anal sex are completely forbidden according to Islamic law. Furthermore the wife has as much right to sexual satisfaction as her husband (Imam al-Ghazali) – The Muslim Marriage Guide by Ruqayyah Maqsood (Quilliam Press).

May I quote from the Prophet Mohamed's last sermon: Hear me well! You have rights

over your wives and they have rights over you!

Thank you very much on behalf of the thousands of Muslim women and girls we counsel each year.

Yours sincerely, ZARINA CHOUDRY Administrator Muslim Women's Helpline Wembley, London 17 January

From Mr Mehdi Hasan Sir: Polly Toynbee asserts that "we may detest everything that Mr Masari stands for", even though she is no more of a representative for the British public than Mr Masari is for the Muslim community. His views on divorce ("it is a very good thing") are totally un-Islamic, as Prophet Mohamed said on several occasions: "Of all the lawful things, the one that God dislikes the most is divorce".

Mr Masari also claims that a Muslim wife should stay at home with the children, forgetting that Mohamed's wife Khadija owned one of Arabia's most successful businesses. Such misguided, sexist views are probably the reason he is twice divorced.

Yours sincerely, MEHDI HASAN Harrow, Middlesex 17 January

### The price of a little mould

From Mr Kevin Brown

Sir: I was interested to read about the sale at Sotheby's of a slide with a sample of a descendant of Alexander Fleming's original *Penicillium notatum* mould for £15,000 ("Fleming treasure", 15 January). The price reached reflects the continued interest in artefacts with even a peripheral connection with Fleming.

What cannot be given such an arbitrary valuation is the actual discovery in a small, dusty laboratory here at St Mary's Hospital, Paddington, in 1928, a chance discovery by a great mind prepared for the unusual that ushered in the antibiotic age in medicine and has saved countless lives and improved the quality of others. The importance of the discovery of penicillin is beyond price, and surely is more valuable than a slide kept in a hat box.

Yours, KEVIN BROWN Trust Archivist Alexander Fleming Laboratory Museum Curator St Mary's Hospital London, W2 17 January

### Delia's frugal days

From Dr Ruth Bryant

Sir: With reference to Louise Levene's article (17 January) concerning "Delia's budget collection" proposals, I have a paperback by Delia Smith called *Frugal Food* published in 1976 and full of exactly the sort of economical but delicious recipes she proposes – very useful when first married!

Yours sincerely, RUTH BRYANT Rugby 17 January

Post letters to Letters to the Editor, and include a daytime telephone number. (Fax 0171-293 2856; e-mail: letters@independent.co.uk) Letters may be edited for length and clarity.

### The place of Greece in Europe

From Ms Despina Christodoulou

Sir: How unsurprising to read yet another wholesale condemnation of Greece in the British press. According to Andrew Gumbel's pseudo-sociological analysis ("An end to the Greek Myth", 17 January), Greece is "primitive", "undisciplined", a "liefdom" of nepotism and corruption, where orgies of violence are commonplace, surviving only through the generous European Union funds that it squanders.

True, Greece is quite unlike the rest of Europe, but herein lies its strength. Greece's Byzantine and Ottoman pasts provide Greece with a cultural make-up and "mental geography" shared by much of the region but inaccessible to the rest of the EU.

Greece has an invaluable insight into the psychological aspects of the new nationalisms springing up in the nether regions of Europe – Chechnya and Bosnia being good examples. And, with the Balkans on track for recovery, Greece is due to become a regional powerhouse. This is where a "strategy" for Greece lies – to put it cynically, as Europe's outpost in the East. But first the rest of Europe must learn to appreciate Greece and its idiosyncrasies a little more.

Yours sincerely, D. CHRISTODOULOU Cambridge 18 January

From Professor Roderick Beaton Sir: Andrew Gumbel attributes to Andreas Papandreu the breathtaking achievement, for a prime

minister of Greece, of securing EU funding for a bridge between the European and Asiatic shores of Turkey ("across the Hellenic point"). In sober fact, the Rio Antirio bridge, if it is ever built, will span the mouth of the Gulf of Corinth, the waterway in which the armies of Christendom and Islam clashed in the year 1573, causing Miguel de Cervantes to lose an arm and take up writing as a career.

More seriously, in his eagerness to attribute all the political, social and economic ills of Greece to the agency of one man, Mr Gumbel's searing condemnation of the "towering personality of Greek politics over the past 15 years" gives your readers no hint of the fact that for three of these years, from 1990 to 1993, Greece was governed by the opposing, right-wing New Democracy Party under the premiership of Constantine Mitsotakis, and for another year (1989-90) by an all-party coalition.

To lay the blame for all the perceived ills of Greece today on one man is to perpetuate the most dangerous and absurd of all the myths on which the electoral success of Papandreu's Pasok movement and the cross-party emotion surrounding his departure from political life are alike founded, namely that *l'état, c'est moi*.

Yours faithfully, RODERICK BEATON Department of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies King's College London, WC2 18 January

### No pastiche for Paternoster

From Mr Paul Fisher

Sir: We should have the courage to develop Paternoster Square in a contemporary style or indeed in contemporary styles, representing the diversity and vigour of modern design. There is no reason why the site needs to be developed in a uniform way. Pastiche development has characterised its history and would certainly be more truly reflective of the nature of the place than monolithic neo-classical pastiche.

And the cry that anything surrounding a "classic" building must be "in sympathy" with it is generally only the cry of the effete. The juxtaposition of Clare College and King's College Chapel, for example, has itself become a model vista but both are the essence of their own periods. Harmony and proportion can be achieved without cutesy replication of the style of another era.

Yours sincerely, PAUL FISHER London, W2 12 January

From Mr G. C. Turle

Sir: It strikes me that the redevelopment of Paternoster Square needs a special feature to focus attention and make it a worthy site for tourists to visit. A source of interest would be created by the erection of a tower clock comparable in style to the clock in St Mark's Square in Venice.

Twelve ex-prime ministers' statues, armed with a hammer, would rotate to strike the time. In the case of Mrs Thatcher the hammer would be dispensed with and a handbag substituted instead.

Yours sincerely, G. C. TURLE Canterbury, Kent 17 January

### The Pope as a stakeholder

From Mr Christopher Road

Sir: The thinking behind the stakeholder economy, as described in David Marquand's interesting article ("A stake through the heart of old simplicities", 15 January), is strikingly reminiscent of Catholic social teaching. Not widely known in this country, this substantial body of thought has been developed by successive popes over the past 100 years and provides the moral arguments for a stakeholder society as described by Professor Marquand.

Yours faithfully, CHRISTOPHER ROAD London, SW15 15 January

### Car worship

From Mr Alan Corder

Sir: In the week that the Government's chief curriculum adviser complained that morality had become no more than a matter of taste, we have the Church of England breaking the second and third commandments by bowing down to the "motor car" in Coventry Cathedral.

The second commandment, according to Exodus 20, is "you shall not make a carved image for yourself", and the third is "you shall not bow down to them or worship them", which in my opinion is what the congregation did yesterday when they allowed a car to be the reason for the service.

When I saw the Bishop of Coventry defending this service with what I took to be a gold-plated exhaust pipe in his left hand, I thought, Heaven help us. Yours faithfully, ALAN CORDER Chard, Somerset 18 January



## 'Sky is good for sport. And we will show it'

The satellite company is under fierce attack. In a rare interview with Mathew Horsman, its head, **Sam Chisholm**, defends his strategy

Sam Chisholm hardly ever speaks in public. Even in his legendary calls to journalists who write things he does not like, the ticking off – in colourful language punctuated by the odd howl of rage – is prefaced by the warning: "This is off the record; don't you dare bloody use my name." But yesterday the chief executive of BSkyB, a multi-millionaire New Zealander and Rupert Murdoch's top television executive outside the US, was all smiles, all charm and ready – no, *wanting* to be quoted.

The uncharacteristic welcome granted the Independent at BSkyB's low-lying, modern modular headquarters in Isleworth, west London, had more than just a social purpose. For perhaps the first time, Mr Chisholm is behaving as though he believes the Government may really be gunning for Sky, Britain's leading pay-television company and the dominant broadcaster of sporting events.

Envious rival broadcasters and backbench MPs from both sides of the House of Commons routinely denounce Sky as monopolistic, anti-competitive and a scab on the body cultural. With the new Broadcasting Bill making its way through Parliament, they have now been given a chance to act. Cross-party support for an amendment to the Bill emerged this week which would provide greater protection for "listed" events – including the Grand National, the FA Cup, the Derby, England cricket, the World Cup and Wimbledon. Current legislation prohibits the broadcast of these events on pay-per-view television. The politicians now want to keep them off subscription television, too, a prospect that worries Sky.

The extent of parliamentary support for the amendment is striking. Both the Conservatives and new Labour have been cautiously courting Mr Murdoch, aware of the power he wields through his stable of British newspapers. But here at last was a simple, straightforward issue on which simple, straightforward politicians could agree: sport is part of the lifeblood of the nation and ought to be widely accessible. Football – at least the big matches – is not like any old commodity, bought and sold according to the cold hard market. It is a cultural event, a defining facet of our national identity, in need of special protection.

That this is true, largely, only for men. That regional and class differences weigh heavily in the degree of affection Britons feel for the "national" sport seems not to have been much discussed. Forgotten is how much Sky has already done for football: better match coverage, superior technology for replays and colour commentary and – crucially – more money for the owners of the leading clubs. Forgotten, too, is the fact that Sky provided 9,500 hours of sport last year, 3,000 of them live broadcasts – dwarfing the schedules of both ITV and BBC.

All these issues were tossed aside this week. Instead, many MPs are fretting about how national sport is too important to be left wholly to the market, and worrying about the influence television can have on the very fabric of sport – from switching rugby from a winter to a summer game to suit broadcasters, to changing the timing and length of matches to accommodate advertising breaks.

Thanks to sport and film, Sky has become the country's most profitable broadcaster. Hollywood films and top sporting events such as the Premier League and golf's Ryder Cup have driven satellite dish sales to more than 4.6 million and fuelled subscriptions to Sky's

multi-channel package, providing BSkyB with nearly £1bn a year in operating profits. Without the two types of programmes that people have shown themselves willing to pay for, Sky is an unappealing mix of American imports, standard news, and cheap "lifestyle" and entertainment programmes.

In the battle to ensure that market forces, rather than government interference, dictate the economics of sport on television, Mr Chisholm has already lined up an impressive list of allies. Among them are the leading officials of virtually every professional sport. "What you have to ask is what is good for the sporting community," he says. "Just ask them whether they want the old BBC-ITV monopoly or real competition for rights. Sky is the best thing that has ever happened to British sports."

Hear, hear, say the Football League, the Premier League, professional rugby, even cricket. And why not? As David Dien, vice-chairman of Arsenal Football Club, points out, broadcast rights to the next five years of Premier League football are likely to spiral to at least £500m, a far cry from the paltry sums – as low as £3m annually – formerly paid by the two traditional broadcasters, BBC and ITV, in the days of the duopoly.

BSkyB has come back hard, sponsoring an

**'Ask the sporting community whether they want the old BBC-ITV monopoly or real competition'**

industry seminar on Wednesday that pitted sporting organisations against politicians. "We have nothing against a voluntary list of events," says David Elstein, Sky's director of programming. "We don't believe it should be legislated against the wishes of the sporting organisations themselves." In other words, Mr Elstein wants the list dropped altogether.

He makes one incontrovertible point: the list is out of date and inconsistent. "Why protect the Grand National and not the Cheltenham Gold Cup? Why the FA Cup but not the League Cup?"

Mr Chisholm scoffs at complaints from politicians that Sky's control of important televised sporting events means fewer highlights on mainstream television. "We made it possible for the BBC to revive *Match of the Day*," he says. "We have also shared the rights to Football League matches." He accuses one of Sky's chief critics, the BBC, of capriciousness: "We went to the BBC and asked for the rights to highlights of the Atlanta Olympics. They said no, we won't share them with you."

Intransigence by public service broadcast-

ers here and on the Continent was the main reason why News Corporation, BSkyB's controlling shareholder, bid \$2bn for the European rights to the Olympic Games between 2000 and 2008. "We have given firm undertakings that the games would have a wide viewership," Mr Chisholm says. "If News Corporation managed to buy the Olympics, there would certainly be coverage on terrestrial television."

The BBC complains that it cannot compete against Sky's deep pockets. But Mr Chisholm finds this astonishing, given how much bigger the BBC's overall budgets are: "If the BBC wants to increase sports programming, it should reallocate spending from other strands. The BBC competes in the marketplace for Noel Edmonds, so why not for sport?" Time, he believes, is on his side: "The technological revolution means more services and more competition. The only constant is change, and television is changing radically. Legislation created in the Fifties is anachronistic."

Anyway, within a decade, he and his senior executives hint, the BBC will be unable to justify the licence fee and will be forced to compete openly, accepting that the creeping commercialisation that already characterises some of its operations under John Birt will have reached the logical conclusion: privatisation.

In the short term, the list of protected events may well be strengthened and politicians will be content. But for them simply to concentrate on sport, when BSkyB's pay-TV stranglehold has more to do with technology, access to satellite capacity, its control of billing systems and its exclusive deals with programme-suppliers, is to miss the point.

It misses, indeed, an even bigger point: the changing nature of British society. We no longer all watch the same programmes, nor do we even share the same view of the nation. Television may be fragmenting, but then so are our communities and our sense of how we relate to politics, culture and each other.

More prosaically, constraining the market for sport rights is commercially short-sighted, and not just from Mr Murdoch's perspective. "We don't want to limit the possibility of bidding for sport rights on our own account," a rival senior television executive says. "Our real problem is with Murdoch's monopoly, and listing events isn't going to help."

Competition policy ought to provide a remedy, if Sky is truly acting as a monopoly. The Office of Fair Trading is looking at such issues and expects to make a ruling later this year. Pressure from the OFT will do far more to restrain Sky's hold on pay-TV than any single-issue protectionism. But Mr Chisholm is not taking chances and will fight the politicians all the way. "They are wrong, and we can show it. We are a force for good. We have already shown what we can do with football; we can and intend to do the same with other sports."

Sam Chisholm, chief executive of BSkyB: 'Television is changing radically'  
Photograph: Reuters



## Let's be alcoholics, like in the movies!

King Street, Cambridge. Two-thirty in the afternoon. Two girls and a boy, sixth-formers maybe, undergraduates maybe. One of the girls, hardly able to stand, wriggles and paws the boy in a drunken parody of seduction. The boy, drunk too, I'd say, but still upright, rolls away from her flailing hands but keeps his eyes on her hiked-up skirt and her twisted blouse. The second girl is sober, concerned, seems to be waiting meekly for the staggering temptress to collapse so that she can drag her away. She must have been bored out of her wits by this grotesque little scene, but she seemed ready to stay for all the time it was likely to take.

Why are the drunk and so tolerant of the drunk? How many times have you seen the sober struggling to get the drunk indoors and out of harm's way, giving up hours to cushion this kind of drug abuser from the consequences of his/her own actions?

All other substances that are capable of altering behaviour and personality as radically as alcohol does are demonised, even when the altered behaviour is social rather than anti-social. Ecstasy is touted nowadays as a dangerous drug, when the deaths resulting from its use are less numerous than those caused by peanut allergy. Alcohol, which is an addictive and dangerous drug that inflicts a vast toll upon the family, industry, the health service and law enforce-

ment, is exempt. What is more, young people are systematically inducted into alcohol dependency with the approval of those who claim to have their interests at heart.

From the day a student arrives at university, that student will be taught to drink. The breweries and distilleries provide college bars with alcohol of all kinds at reduced rates, just so that students will learn to drink. The rationale is that they will learn how to drink. The truth is that they will learn that alcohol is an essential adjunct to any social interaction.

Some of them have already begun drinking to excess. When I lecture at sixth-form conferences and pop into a neighbouring pub for a beer and a sandwich, I find the bar surrounded four or five deep by sixth-formers, ordering double vodkas with orange squash. How they can have the money to indulge such expensive (if revolting) tastes is one question that parents might ask themselves. I have never seen a barman ask a single one of these kids for ID. The marketing of fruit squashes heavily laced with alcohol to an even younger age group was clearly based on good research.

Liquor firms have a responsibility to their shareholders to increase their markets and sales at every available opportunity, and in this they are given every assistance. Gone are the days, I hope, when hotel guests retiring to bed



GERMAINE GREER

would find a miniature bottle of brandy on the pillow, for which they had unwittingly paid in the bill for the room. At May balls in Cambridge colleges the cost of a hard-liquor bar is included in the exorbitant price of the ticket. There is no need for any such thing; if tipsiness is the aim, champagne is more than enough. The fact that 19-year-olds can drink as much as *much* *Cambridge* as they think they want adds nothing to the quality of the experience. I have seen beautiful young women in dresses they saved all year for, eyes unfocused, mouths slack, too drunk to move, let alone dance, and the night so young as to be still evening. It can be no consolation to know that they were forced to pay for the wreck of their own good time. The colleges could dispense with the hard liquor bar and reduce the price of the ticket, so why don't they?

Alcohol abuse on university campuses has become a huge problem.

Housekeeping staff are often expected to clean up disgusting messes in corridors and public rooms. Some would say that the young are learning from the unpleasant experience of intoxication not to repeat their mistakes, a view which seems to hold that alcohol can be managed, and by everyone, which is clearly untrue. Others would say that they are learning that drunkenness is tolerable, fun even, and throwing up merely laddish. What they certainly learn is that somebody else will clean up.

Now, to confer Hollywood glamour upon alcoholism, comes a film, nominated for the best film award at Cannes, where the brewers and distillers doubtless do a roaring trade. *Leaving Las Vegas* begins fairly promisingly, showing us a drunk who is nearly as obnoxious and boring as a real drunk, but romanticism takes over. The drunk wants to kill himself with alcohol, which he accomplishes by pouring full bottles of vodka down his neck at a rate that would have poisoned him if it had been water.

Kids can kill themselves by skolling whole bottles of vodka, but not seasoned alcoholics. No alcoholic would waste the amount of liquor he spills around the joint, but then no one in the last stages of alcoholism would look half as fit as he does, despite the heavy make-up. No shakes to speak of; no horrors; no peripheral neuritis for him;

no alcoholic gastritis; no Wernicke's encephalopathy. No piss stains on his nice clean trousers. Oh sure, he says he vomits, but we never see him do it, and his not eating in these days of anorexia is pretty cool, specially when he picks the ice-cube out of his glass with his chopsticks. He doesn't repeat himself, ever, oh no. His memory and his speech centres go on working. None of the nastiness, the self-righteousness, the self-pity, the viciousness of the long-term alcoholic sours him.

He is just so sweet he wins the affections of a down-trodden hooker, whom he doesn't force to drink along with him, doesn't bicker with, doesn't hit. You'd never think that alcohol is implicated in most homicides and most domestic violence, to see this guy who succeeds in snuffing it on schedule and, preposterously, on the job.

I have known people who have been killing themselves with alcohol for 30 years; every time they get within reach of their goal, someone picks them up, puts them in hospital and sorts them out so that they can go on drinking. The policemen, ambulance-drivers, paramedics and nurses who have to deal with these pests (who are quite likely to show their appreciation by attacking them and smashing up casualty wards), not to mention the legions of women and children abused by alcoholics, should picket cinemas showing *Leaving Las Vegas*.

## Even duchesses have debts

ANOTHER VIEW

Viv Nicholson

around people who think you are clever for coming into a lot of money fast – and it sounds as if the Duchess has been spending hard to impress the people around her.

I wonder if she will find, as I did, that her friends will disappear very quickly now she is in difficulties. No one phoned, no one apologised, no one offered to lend me any money. I was left alone with four children to bring up.

For a while I am sure she has been denying that she is really in trouble. I used to go out and spend £700 in a day, then the bank would phone up and say they were going to bounce the cheque. It is so hard to let go of that fantastic feeling of freedom – you can buy 10 pairs of shoes and 10 outfits all at once. Then you come home and you have got all these shoes and clothes, and you think, what was that about? Or you give a party – which would cost £2,000 in those days – all to impress other people.

The humiliation of losing all your money is terrible. But you have to take stock of what you have, face up to your

responsibilities and live through it. You swap the big house for a small one, and you sell the car. In the process you discover who really values you, even when you have nothing to give.

The people I am close to now really want me, not what I have to give – in fact, I am more likely to be sponging off them. I will phone them up and say, "I'm a bit short, can I come over to tea?"

My children have never reproached me for what happened, and I hope Beatrice and Eugenie will be just as understanding.

I now have a job at a duty-free shop selling perfume, and I live in a small terraced house. But it is a happy house, and there is a room here for the Duchess of York if she needs it.

When I read that the Duchess of York had an overdraft of £3m, thanks to excessive spending, it took me back to the days in the Sixties when I won £152,000 on the pools – equivalent to £3m in today's money – and vowed to "spend, spend, spend". Four years later, I had spent it all.

Of course, the Duchess is in a different position. I am sure that if I had married into a wealthy family I would have expected them always to back me for ever, and have no qualms about it. She must think that she can go on spending and spending and the Queen will always pick up her bills. Well, the Queen has said no and I think she was right. We all have to learn responsibility and to stand on our own two feet.

The Duchess has to remember now that dealing with debts needs courage

and brazenness – just the same qualities it takes to spend the money in the first place. You have to pay off your debts little by little, and blame no one but yourself. I knew I had no rich parents to help me out; she must face up to the fact that she has no one, either.

The friends that surround her now may well turn out to be like the "friends" who helped me to spend my money. All my old friends, the people I grew up with, faded away when I won – they did not want to be accused of going after my money. In their place came hangers-on, people who were great fun and great friends – as long as I paid the piper. It is hard to live



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**Economy:** As the City bets on a further fall in rates by March, buoyant retail sales and improved confidence arouse doubts

# Surprise cut lifts Footsie to record

**Lenders brace for renewed warfare**

PAUL WALLACE  
Economics Editor

Kenneth Clarke cut interest rates yesterday by a quarter point to 4.25 per cent, in a surprise move that propelled the stock market to a record high.

The City is betting on another quarter point cut by March, and a further reduction by the beginning of June, bringing rates down to 5.75 per cent.

Gilt reacted favourably with the March long gilt future rising by half a point.

Yesterday's move brings rates to their lowest for a year and was welcomed by industry and commerce. But the absence of

November and the economy growing below trend - had also led to the decision. The sharp fall in the rate of inflation, particularly in Europe, was also contributing to slower growth at home.

Further evidence of the seriousness of the European downturn came from Germany, where the IFO business climate index fell from 94.8 in November to 93.2 in December.

In France, meagre economic growth of 0.2 per cent in the third quarter of 1995 was confirmed.

Responding to the weakness of the economy, the French central bank cut the key intervention rate by 25 basis points to 4.20 per cent. The five-to-10 day lending rate, which acts as a ceiling, was cut from 5.85 to 5.60 per cent.

The Bank of England said the absence of any public comment on the rate cut marked a reversion to normal practice whereby the monthly monetary meeting remains confidential until the release of the minutes six weeks afterwards.

In a BBC interview, Mr Clarke said: "We refuse to give hints one way or the other."

However, the timing of the cut was generally regarded in the City as politically inspired, if justified by the state of the economy. "The economics left the door open but politics must have played a big part in the timing," said Paul Mortimer-Lee, of Paribas Capital Markets.

Bill Martin, chief economist at UBS, said: "I suspect the Governor might have wanted to wait a bit, but the Governor is no longer a constraint, the only effective constraint is the exchange rate. The Chancellor will press rates down to the limits of sterling's resilience."

Despite this assessment, it seems unlikely that the decision marks a re-run of last summer's open division between Mr Clarke and Mr George over interest rates. When the minutes are released, they are more likely to show Mr George was not pressing for a cut, but neither was he opposing one.

Roger Boole, group chief economist at HSBC, said: "My guess is that he didn't oppose it outright, he is more likely to have acquiesced reluctantly."



Hasty exit: Chancellor Kenneth Clarke leaving television studios in Millbank, London yesterday after cutting borrowing rates

Photograph: PA

## Clarke moves despite inflation setback

DIANE COYLE  
Economics Correspondent

The Chancellor's decision to reduce base rates for the second time in two months flew in the face of yesterday's economic statistics. They showed that inflation increased last month, retailers enjoyed a record Christmas and business confidence improved for the first time in nearly two years.

This leaves manufacturing the weakest area of the economy. Figures due next week should fill in the broader picture, with an initial estimate for fourth-quarter GDP and the Confederation of British Industry's detailed quarterly business survey. Growth in the final three months of last year is expected to look subdued, held back by flat manufacturing output.

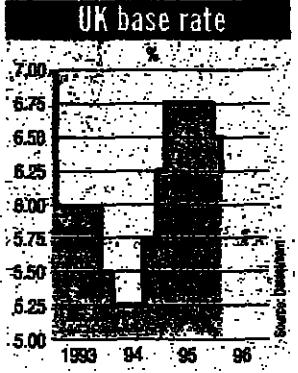
Increases in excise duties announced in the Budget helped take headline retail price inflation up from 3.1 to 3.2 per cent last month. Inflation excluding mortgage interest payments climbed to 3.0 per cent, compared with its 2.5 per cent target.

Higher duties on petrol and tobacco explained about half of the monthly rise in the retail price index. However, other components, including household goods and non-seasonal foods such as dairy products and processed meat, contributed to the increase.

The next two months will probably see inflation dip again. There will be less impact from excise duties this January than a year ago, when Kenneth Clarke's mini-budget brought extra increases. Lower mort-

gage rates will help this month, and the petrol price war from February.

City economists were divided yesterday about inflation prospects further ahead. Kevin Darlington at the broker Hoare Govett said: "Inflation remains



surprisingly stubborn." However, James Barty at Deutsche Morgan Grenfell said: "Despite the inflation upset this month, the general trend remains downward."

Separate statistics showed that the value of sales set a record in December, reaching a weekly average of £4.2bn. This was 44 per cent higher than the average for the rest of 1995, making it the biggest Christmas boom since the late 1980s. The rate of growth in high street spending reached its highest for a year.

Sales volumes showed an upward trend, increasing 1.7 per cent in the year to December. This was their fastest growth for six months, although lower than in 1994. Figures for earlier months were revised up. The rollover National Lottery

jackpot will dent January retail sales, but analysts said the trend was encouraging.

On top of the evidence of buoyant consumer sector, yesterday also brought the first signs of business cheer. Business optimism rose for the first time in nearly two years in the final quarter of last year, according to a British Chambers of Commerce survey.

The BCC president, Robin Geldard, said: "These figures point to a better 1996."

Domestic sales had stabilised and exports were holding up after declining earlier in the year, according to the survey. Although big firms shed staff, there was a sharp rise in reported shortages of skilled labour - a classic warning signal of higher wage increases.

any endorsement from the Bank of England aroused widespread suspicions in the City that the Chancellor had dictated policy to a reluctant Eddie George, the Bank of England Governor.

While the FT-SE 100 index soared by 44.5 points to 3,748.7, sterling fell back on the foreign exchanges. The Bank of England's trade-weighted index against a basket of currencies fell from 83.2 to 83, near its all-time low, as the pound weakened against the dollar and mark on fears of a renewed leadership challenge to John Major.

Despite the pick-up in retail price inflation in December, Mr Clarke said he had made the decision "in the light of further evidence confirming inflationary pressures have continued to ease". The Chancellor pointed to stable earnings growth and a drop in factory gate inflation.

Mr Clarke said that the economic slowdown - with manufacturing output stalled in

## Standard sets tough rules on governance

PETER RODGERS  
Business Editor

Standard Life yesterday told Britain's top 100 quoted companies that it expected tougher performance conditions for the award of directors' share options and long-term incentive schemes than those in the Greenbury report.

The request was in a letter to the chairman of FT-SE 100 companies from Dick Barfield, the chief investment manager, setting out Standard Life's new corporate governance guidelines.

The Edinburgh-based company manages £42bn of funds and is Europe's largest mutual life insurer, owning more than 2 per cent of the UK equity market, so its guidelines are expected to have a significant influence on company behaviour.

Mr Barfield said the guidelines covered "pretty well all the points" in the Cadbury and Greenbury reports. But a lot of companies used total shareholder return - share price plus dividends - as the sole measure of performance, which Standard believed was wrong.

He added that the benefits should be awarded against

some measure of underlying financial performance such as value added or growth in earnings per share that the managers could affect directly, unlike the share price.

The main features of the guidelines are advice to separate the roles of chairman and chief executives, a fundamental plank of the Cadbury report, and the appointment of effective independent non-executive directors.

There must be comprehensive disclosure of remuneration, and incentive schemes must reward directors for high performance, not mediocrity.

Standard's letter also recommends that directors' service contracts should not exceed one year, rather than the two to three years widely practised now. Although Greenbury said there was a strong case for one-year contracts, its recommendation was hedged, and Standard appears to be making the point more robustly.

Mr Barfield said the guidelines were not a box-ticking exercise. Adherence to the spirit of our policies is the key.

Standard Life already votes as a matter of course at all shareholders' meetings and meets all the top 100 companies at least once a year. It plans to

vet compliance with the guidelines and will also ask smaller companies in which it holds shares to observe them - although the request will probably be made in meetings, not by sending a letter to the chairman.

Mr Barfield said Standard already had a policy of identifying underperforming companies and telling them if they were seen to be following the wrong strategy.

If the share price did not reflect the problem and management did not listen, one outcome would be to sell the shares. If the problem was already in the share price, Standard would tell the company it should think about changing management, probably by talking to the non-executives, who under Standard's guidelines would include the chairman.

In hostile bids, Standard does not automatically support the incumbent management. Mr Barfield said the company had not yet made up its mind about the Granada bid for Forte.

Standard's letter came a day after Ian Irvine, chairman of Reed Elsevier and Reed International, said companies should be free to ignore parts of the Cadbury code on corporate governance.

## Grand Met leads in £200m Walker battle

JOHN WILLCOCK  
Financial Correspondent

Grand Metropolitan won an important round in its £200m dispute with Brent Walker yesterday when the High Court ruled that the sale of its William Hill and Mecca business to George Walker seven years ago should be re-interpreted.

Brent Walker said yesterday that it would study the judgment and then decide whether to appeal. The dispute centred on a disagreement between George

Walker, the former chairman of Brent Walker, and Lord Sheppard, the Grand Met chairman, on the accounting standard used in Grand Met's £685m sale of the betting shop business to Brent Walker in 1989.

Walker maintained that Lord Sheppard had guaranteed at the time of the sale that the business would make profits of £55m in its first year, which it did not.

Grand Met, however, said it had used acquisition accounting to show profits of £58m for the business in the year to September 1989 and Brent Walker

should have been aware that William Hill's one-off costs would be charged to profits.

Yesterday the court ruled that the agreement on the sale should be "rectified", a legal term which means that Grand Met is not disputing what the contract says but that the contract does not reflect what it thought it had agreed.

The High Court ruling, said Grand Met, "will ensure that the agreement is interpreted in the same way as both parties intended at the time it was made."

"Arthur Andersen is currently arbitrating on the dispute between the two companies, and the ruling by the High Court forms part of the arbitration process. Grand Met remains confident of the outcome of this arbitration process."

Brent Walker has not yet decided whether to appeal, but is still keen for the dispute to be cleared up as soon as possible, according to its finance director, John Leach, yesterday.

The dispute began when Brent Walker refused to hand over

STOCK MARKETS									
FT-SE 100			Dow Jones			Nikkei			
3190	3190	3190	11500	11500	11500	20000	20000	20000	20000
7750	7750	7750	11100	11100	11100	19800	19800	19800	19800
3070	3070	3070	10800	10800	10800	19600	19600	19600	19600
3020	3020	3020	10600	10600	10600	19400	19400	19400	19400
2980	2980	2980	10400	10400	10400	19200	19200	19200	19200
1995/96 High 1995/96 Low Yield(%)									
FTSE 100	3748.70	+44.50	+1.2	3748.70	2954.20	3.81			
FTSE 250	4058.20	+22.60	+0.6	4058.20	3200.90	3.61			
FTSE 350	1857.40	+19.50	+1.1	1857.40	1482.40	3.77			
FT Small Cap	1980.22	+4.04	+0.2	1980.22	1673.61	3.15			
FT All Share	1829.71	+18.11	+1.0	1829.71	1489.23	3.72			
New York	5083.16	+16.26	+0.3	5216.47	3832.08	2.33			
Tokyo	20370.04	-200.22	-1.0	20689.03	14485.41	0.741			
Hong Kong	10536.49	-57.33	-0.5	10671.15	6967.93	3.501			
Frankfurt	2380.90	+9.60	+0.4	2380.90	1910.96	1.874			

INTEREST RATES									
Short sterling*			UK medium gilt			US long bond			
1 Month	1 Year	3 Month	1 Year	3 Month	1 Year	1 Year	3 Month	1 Year	3 Month
4.25	4.25	4.25	7.24	8.86	7.42	8.63			
US	5.47	5.18	5.64	7.75	5.98	7.83			
Japan	0.41	0.36	2.82	4.69					
Germany	3.58	3.28	5.79	7.92	8.50				
*Benchmark indices									
MAIN PRICE CHANGES									
Index	Price	Change	% Change	Index	Price	Change	% Change	Index	Price
Lloyds Chemicals	401	35	9.6	Guinness	474.5	14.5	3.0		
Unilever	258.5	19.5	8.2	Trafalgar House	29.5	0.8	2.5		
Amstrad	184	9	5.1	Nymex Cablescom	95	2	2.1		

CURRENCIES									
£/\$			£/DM			£/¥			
1.5219	-0.87	1.5698	0.8571	+0.37	0.837	165.7	+0.11	0.831	
1.5235	-0.25	1.586	0.8594	+0.11	0.831	165.7	+0.11	0.831	
1.5235	-0.25	1.586	0.8594	+0.11	0.831	165.7	+0.11	0.831	
1.5235	-0.25	1.586	0.8594	+0.11	0.831	165.7	+0.11	0.831	
1.5235	-0.25	1.586	0.8594	+0.11	0.831	165.7	+0.11	0.831	
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1.5235	-0.25	1.586	0.8594	+0.11	0.831	165.7	+0.11	0.831	
1.5235	-0.25	1.586	0.8594	+0.11	0.831	165.7	+0.11	0.831	
1.5235	-0.25	1.586	0.8594	+0.11	0.831	165.7	+0.11	0.831	

## Forte steps up war of words in bid battle

MATHEW HORSMAN

Forte yesterday predicted that Granada could lose up to one-third of the management fees from Meriden, the hotels group, if its £3.9bn hostile bid goes through.

The luxury hotels and restaurants company, which is in the final desperate stages of defending its independence, said the loss of contracts could jeopardise a sale of the Meriden chain, which Granada has promised as part of its asset disposal programme. Nine owners could terminate their management contracts immediately, Forte said, and warned that a domino effect could induce a further wave of exits.

Patrick Copeland, Hotels Director at Forte, said that in the light of the question marks over the Meriden contracts, "Granada's ability to realise £2.1bn proceeds from its planned asset sales look ill-founded and unrealistic."

Granada has said it would raise £500m from the sale of Forte's 68 per cent stake in Savoy, the motorway service operations and a stake in Alpha, the catering group. Another £1.6bn would come from hotel sales, including the Meriden chain. Yesterday, Granada dis-





'While there are some early indications of a pick-up in retail spending, the stagnation of manufacturing production and the plight of construction are hard realities'

## The right decision on rates, despite the timing

Kenneth Clarke is a man in a hurry – and Mr Major's latest tribulations explain why. If the electoral timetable were not pressing upon the Government, who can doubt that the Chancellor would not have chanced his arm on cutting interest rates on a day when inflation edged up?

Like the dog that didn't bark, the silence of the Bank of England offers an eloquent clue to Eddie George's preference. The Governor was doubtless at pains to avoid being boxed into another corner opposing the Chancellor. But he is unlikely to have turned over a new leaf. Given the evidence of a pick-up in retail sales in the final quarter of 1995 and the buoyancy of both broad and narrow money, Mr George would almost certainly have preferred delay. After all, the two of them were due to meet in just three weeks' time on 7 February.

But if a week is a long time in politics, how much more so would three weeks be to this government drowning in a sea of troubles. Not for the first time, Mr Clarke has had to throw a lifebelt into the water. Politics may be back in the driving seat of monetary policy and the new monetary arrangements which were supposed to give the Bank so much more discretion are proving an illusory bargain for Mr George. Britain seems no closer to a stable framework of counter-inflationary policy.

Yet taken on its merits, the decision was the right one, even though it would have looked more credible if it had been delayed

to February, a week before the bank of England's Inflation Report. While there are some early indications of a pick-up in retail spending, the stagnation of manufacturing production and the plight of construction are hard realities. As the Chancellor himself said, the downturn in Britain's export markets is contributing to the slowdown in the economy.

This is the real storm cloud that threatens to break. The downturn in the German and French economies has occurred much more quickly than anyone anticipated. Most economists think the easing in monetary policy by the German and French central banks will lead to a bounce-back in the second half of 1996. This looks like wishful thinking.

At the still centre of the storm is the flagging German economy. The powerhouse of the European economy – that's the usual byline, but if so, a powerhouse running on half empty. With the mark painfully over-valued, Germany seems set to follow Britain's earlier example of deindustrialisation when sterling soared into the stratosphere in the early 1980s.

Mr Clarke will be able to hear from fellow finance ministers and central bankers when they turn up for the G7 meeting in Paris tomorrow. The dangers of a flagging world economy are now firmly on the agenda – and not before time. But without an uncharacteristic rush of blood to the head of the German Bundesbank, it is hard to see early relief to conditions of near recession

in Continental Europe. As long as they persist, the chances of further rate cuts in Britain over-stimulating the economy seem negligible.

### Too much debt will slow Railtrack down

Nothing, barring an early change of government, is now going to stop the flotation of Railtrack, scheduled to occur in May. Labour continues to insist that it has some kind of nuclear weapon up its sleeve that will so thoroughly deter investors that the company becomes unsaleable. We have yet to see what that is, however, and for the time being it can only be assumed that Labour's threats are just bluff. Even so, there is an unenviable amount still to be settled about this flotation, given the closeness of the final countdown.

As yesterday's board meeting was made only too aware, the most important issue is the company's level of debt. This may seem like one just for the accountants, but the truth is that if rail privatisation is to fulfil its underlying commercial purpose – the modernisation and improvement of the rail network – Railtrack's capital structure is crucial. The more the debt write-off, the greater the capacity of the Railtrack balance sheet to take on infrastructure projects – Cross-rail, Thameslink and the second phase of West Coast line modernisation among them. On present debts of £1.7bn, Railtrack

would be cash-negative for many years; there would be precious little new investment of any sort. Even the Treasury isn't arguing the company should be left with that kind of burden. But with its usual priority of maximising proceeds, the Exchequer does want to keep the write-off as small as possible.

This is short-sighted. Rail privatisation has already cost the Government huge amounts of political goodwill. Having doggedly stuck it out thus far, and with so little money in it for the Treasury anyway, it would be the height of folly to surrender so much of the supposed benefit of privatisation for the sake of a marginal and short-lived improvement in public finances.

On the other hand, it would plainly be wrong to sell Railtrack in totally debt-free form. That would make it look too much like another privatisation giveaway and would encourage senseless diversification to boot. There is nothing wrong with a bit of debt, but the Treasury extreme of £1bn would only prove rail privatisation's many and vociferous opponents to have been right all along.

### Unichem strategy convinces the City

Unichem has come a long way since its days as a drugs wholesaling co-operative. In the five years or so that the company has been listed on the stock market, it has built itself into the nation's biggest inde-

pendent wholesaler of drugs. It now looks set to become owner of the largest chemists chain as well, creating a new household name on the high street – Moss.

The sharp rise in the share price which accompanied news of Unichem's £548m bid for Lloyds Chemists suggests management has convinced the City of the merits of this strategy. Short-term cost savings and the potential for faster margins mean that for the next two years at least, the deal should enhance earnings per share.

The deal also looks good for Unichem on asset grounds, regardless of any supposed synergies. Roughly speaking, the bid equates to £430,000 per pharmacy, not bad in the antiquated world of prescription chemists where licences have been known to change hands at £500,000 apiece. Lloyds could yet attract a counter from any number of general retailers trying to break into this tightly controlled market.

Trends in the market too may make it imperative for Unichem to increase its size. We have yet to see what impact last year's acquisition of rival wholesaler A&A by Gehe of Germany has on the market place, but it seems probable it will make it more competitive. Meanwhile, the shift of household goods and toiletries sales away from the high street to supermarkets has proved bad for groups like Lloyds, which followed a drug-store approach to retailing. Unichem is rightly emphasising the importance of the pharmacy side of the business and plans to take Lloyds firmly back in that direction.

## Unichem-Lloyds deal creates biggest chain of chemists

MAGNUS GRIMOND

Unichem, the pharmaceuticals retailer and wholesaler, yesterday agreed a £548m offer for rivals Lloyds Chemists to leapfrog Boots as the UK's largest chain of chemists. The combination will result in a chain of 1,300 retail outlets, 100 more than Boots the Chemists, which will trade under the Moss Chemists name. Unichem will also lead the market in drugs wholesaling, with a share of around 35 per cent.

Jeffery Harris, Unichem's chief executive, said the takeover offered the company "a unique chance to create one of Europe's strongest health-care groups".

Lloyds shareholders are being offered 232p in cash plus four Unichem shares for every three shares they own, or a partial cash alternative of 600p in cash and 2,327 shares for every three in Lloyds.

News of the deal sent Lloyds' shares 35p higher to 401p, well above their previous peak of 379p hit two years ago, after soaring 75p on Wednesday when the company first revealed the approach. Unichem, which said the acquisition would be earnings-enhancing in its first year, saw its shares jump 19.5p to 258.5p.

The deal will double the size of the company, trebling its retail market share from 3.5 per cent to 11 per cent and raise its

stake in the wholesaling market from a current figure of 32 per cent.

Despite its vastly improved market position, Unichem expects few problems from the regulation authorities. It is understood that management has been in discussions with the Office of Fair Trading for over a month and is well aware of any likely requirements to meet competition concerns.

Mr Harris said: "We believe the retail merger would create no difficulties for us. You would expect that, as our market share is very similar to Boots in that area." However, he said they did expect to be forced to sell two of the 10 warehouses owned by Lloyds' Daniels Pharmaceuticals prescription drugs distribution business, on top of three that would be closed, anyway.



Committed: Allen Lloyd, who owns 7.5 per cent

Lloyds' directors, led by chairman Allen Lloyd, have recommended acceptance of the bid. Mr Lloyd, who is on a two-year contract at £510,000 a year, owns or controls a 7.5 per cent stake in the company, valued at £38m under the terms of the offer. He has committed his own beneficial holding to the bid.

Lloyds has only recently started to rehabilitate itself after several years when it faced criticism in the City for its aggressive use of acquisition provisions, lack of financial information and shortage of independent voices on the board. Takeover rumours have swirled round the company since last March, when its shares plunged after it announced the closure of over a quarter of the Super-saver drugstore chain.

Unichem expects to reap savings of £15m in the first full year of the merger, rising to £20m in the second. Having completed a review of Lloyds' sites, the expectation is that 30 of the 924 pharmacies will be disposed of and several head offices closed.

Unichem estimated pre-tax profits of at least £49.3m in the year to last December, up from £44m in 1994, before expected rationalisation costs for Lloyds of £26m.

Out of flat earnings per share of 18.8p, the company intends to pay a final dividend of 5.3p, raising the total for last year by 12 per cent to 8p.



Sweet success: Alan Sugar, chairman of Tottenham Hotspur, was cheered by the football club's record interim results, announced yesterday

## Player sales prove a winner for Spurs

DAVID HELLIER

Tottenham Hotspur yesterday reported half-year profits of £7.14m due largely to the early season £5.5m sale of Nick Barmby to Middlesbrough. The sale was seen as controversial at the time, given that it came on top of the departure of Jürgen Klinsmann who left after a one-year stay to play in Germany.

Excluding player trading, the core business of the company

produced a half-year profit of £2.33m against £590,000 last year.

The growth excluding player transfers was due mainly to increased revenues from new sponsorship deals with Hewlett Packard and Pony, higher television fees, higher gate receipts, and increased profits from merchandising.

Alan Sugar, chairman, said the record interim results were pleasing and continued to re-

flect the true potential of Tottenham Hotspur.

The company's share price certainly reflects the renewed optimism surrounding the football club as an investment. In September the shares were 167p on the announcement of the annual results. Yesterday they touched 254p, a high for the year and a 5p increase on the day after the interim results announcement.

John Sedgwick, finance di-

rector, conceded that a rights issue might be a financing option if the club decided to develop its North Stand at White Hart Lane to increase capacity by 3,500-4,000. The cost is likely to be around £6m but there has been no decision yet on whether the project should go ahead.

He said a decision to go ahead would probably be taken only if the ground's current capacity (around 33,000) continued to be tested on a regu-

lar basis. Attendances were now very strong, after a slow start to the season, he said.

A dividend of 1.5p per share is being paid to shareholders, which should be worth around £120,000 to Mr Sugar, who owns nearly half the shares. Recently the club announced its intention to instigate a progressive dividend policy in the hope of attracting more institutional shareholders to buy and hold the stock.

## Virgin named for Gatwick rail service shortlist

CHRISTIAN WOLMAR

Richard Branson's Virgin group has been shortlisted for the rail franchise to run the Gatwick Express shuttle service between the airport and London's Victoria station.

In a statement issued while Mr Branson is trying to fly around the world by balloon, Virgin said it was very pleased to have the chance of using its "wide ex-

perience from the travel industry" to run the trains. Virgin faces competition for the franchise, which is one of four for which bids are due on 1 March, from a management buyout team, the bus group Prism, and possibly one other.

Gatwick Express, the smallest franchise on offer, is one of the few on the rail network which faces direct competition from another operator running

a very similar service. Network SouthCentral, one of the other franchisees, now being offered, provides a slightly slower and slightly cheaper service from Gatwick to London.

The winner of the Gatwick Express franchise will not be responsible for any stations and will provide a simple shuttle operation, making it attractive to existing travel businesses such as Virgin. However BAA,

which operates Gatwick airport, has not pursued its initial interest.

The list of bidders for the other three franchises reveals no new names from those involved in the first round, which involved two successful management buy-outs and one private success, Stagecoach. The bus company again figures in the list, having been shortlisted for East Coast Main Line and Network

SouthCentral – where it has formed an alliance with the management team – but has failed to obtain Gatwick Express or Midland Main Line.

The existing management teams are bidding for all four franchises on offer this time. Other bidders include Prism, Compagnie Generale des Eaux which is interested in Network SouthCentral, and Sea Containers, which has re-entered the

fray to try for the East Coast Line.

The first three franchises are expected to start operating in the private sector on Sunday 4 February, according to transport industry sources. The transfer has to take place early in the morning when no trains are running and public relations specialists are desperately trying to find a way of giving the services a good send off.

## Girobank

Girobank announces that with effect from close of business on 18 January 1996 its Base Rate was reduced from 6.50% to 6.25% per annum.

Girobank plc, 48 Park Lane, London W1Y 4EQ  
Reg. No. 1950000

Former directors await Singapore's next move. Stephen Vines reports from Hong Kong

Singapore's Finance Minister, Richard Hu, yesterday indicated that a decision was imminent on whether further arrests would be made following the imprisonment of Nick Leeson in the wake of what he called the Barings "fiasco".

Mr Hu was answering a parliamentary question about whether further prosecutions would be made in the light of the Singapore inspectors' report into the affair which made accusations against a number of Barings executives.

The Commercial Affairs Department (CAD) has been pursuing these leads, Mr Hu said. "They are in the process of finalising their report. Let us wait for it. It should not be long." The two men most clearly in the firing line, because they are stationed in Singapore, are James Bax, former managing director of Barings Asia Pacific and Simon Jones, former chief operating officer of Barings South Asia. Both men remain in the island state with their passports held by the authorities.

However the report does not suggest that either played any role in Leeson's unauthorised

## Decision on more Barings arrests expected soon

trading in Japanese stock exchange futures, which triggered the collapse of Barings.

Mr Bax worked entirely on the equities side of Barings' business while Mr Jones was essentially an administrator. Mr Jones did not administer the company's futures trading business as Leeson was authorised from London to conduct his own "backroom" work.

However, they were both directors of Barings Futures (Singapore) and therefore may be held technically responsible for the collapse of the company, which triggered the downfall of the entire Barings edifice.

The Singaporean authorities have a particular problem with Mr Bax because at the only of-

ficial press conference held in the wake of the Barings collapse last February they highlighted a letter he sent to his superiors in London warning of the lack of control over Leeson's activities, pointing out that despite his position, he had no role in supervising Leeson's work.

The authorities used this letter to demonstrate that Barings had been warned, from the inside, about the problems arising in the futures market trading.

The inspectors handed over their report to the Minister of Finance last September. However, the outlines of its contents were known around last July. Had there been a strong case against either Mr Bax or Mr Jones, it is almost certain that

they would have been charged alongside Leeson.

However, it appears that Mr Bax, in particular, gave considerable assistance to the CAD and was sufficiently trusted to be allowed out of the country at least twice on business and once for a family holiday. He was about to leave Singapore again, with the permission of the CAD, at the time the inspectors' report was made public.

Other Barings directors in London, such as Peter Norris, the former chief executive officer of Barings Investment Bank, were slated in the report but can only be returned to Singapore after extradition proceedings which would have to prove the existence of a criminal offence under English law.

The authorities are acutely aware of the dangers of moving solely against the expatriate directors based in Singapore, not least because of the signal it would send to other foreign investors with staff stationed there. Moreover, such a move might encourage foreign directors of companies based in Singapore to leave at the first sign of trouble.

### IN BRIEF

#### Bleak outlook for Fokker

The future of the beleaguered Dutch aircraft maker Fokker looked bleak last night as rescue talks reached deadlock. Fokker shares plunged 20 per cent after the company's parent, Daimler Benz, and the Dutch government, failed to agree on a capital injection. The Daimler board meets on Monday to decide its next step, but analysts were pessimistic. Ben van Schaik, Fokker chairman, said: "I still haven't given up hope that we can reach a solution, but the chances are getting smaller."

#### Select Committee calls in BZW

Barclays de Zoete Wedd, the Government's advisers on privatisation of the nuclear industry, have been summoned to appear before the House of Commons Trade and Industry Committee next Tuesday. The Committee is conducting a wide-ranging enquiry into the planned sale but BZW had argued that, as its advice to the Government is confidential, it might not be appropriate for it to give oral evidence in public. The bank is expected to be questioned on the industry's multi-billion pound liabilities.

#### Bristol & West shuts out 'carpetbaggers'

Bristol & West Building Society yesterday moved to shut out "carpetbagging" speculation on a possible flotation or takeover by raising to £2,510 the minimum needed to open new Select, Share, Premier Saver and Premier Accounts.

#### Spanish losses prompt Guinness warning

Guinness warned that full-year profits would be hit by a further £39m restructuring in Spain – bringing the total charges disclosed this year to £84m. The shares closed 14.5p down at 474.5p, wiping almost £300m from the stock market value. Guinness said further cuts were needed because the Spanish market was flat.

#### Jobless figures boost Dow

Shares and bonds rose in the US after new figures suggesting the economy remained weak. The Dow was nearly 20 points higher at 5085.69 by early afternoon and the yield on the benchmark long Treasury bond fell below 6 per cent. But the dollar fell slightly due to profit taking. New unemployment claims fell by 67,000 last week, the lowest figure since the end of July, almost certainly explained by the East Coast blizzard.

#### £28m fraud hits Hongkong Bank

Hongkong Bank has been hit by a £28m fraud at its main branch in Jakarta, Indonesia. Approximately £5m has been recovered, said the UK parent HSBC Holdings. The fraud was uncovered on 3 January by internal controls. HSBC said the fraud has no material effect on the bank.



## THE INVESTMENT COLUMN

Edited by TOM STEVENSON

## Crunch time arrives for Forte

It is crunch time for Forte shareholders, who must make up their minds by Tuesday whether to accept Granada's £3.9bn bid for the hotels group. With only days to run, it is a close call and for once the 15 per cent of Forte's shares in private shareholders' hands might have an influence on the outcome.

In what has been a dramatic, highly personalised bid, the management records of both sides have been well-rehearsed. Forte shareholders are aware, and the chart below confirms the fact, that over the past five years their company has been a dismal performer compared with Gerry Robinson's Granada. But that is of little consequence now - looking forward they have to answer three questions.

What will happen to their Forte shares if the bid fails? Should they sell in the market? Or should they accept Granada's cash and paper and hold on? Forte has attempted to pre-empt the first question by attempting to create a floor for its share price at 330p with the offer of a share buy-back. But this will only go ahead if it enhances earnings, so it is hardly a copper-bottomed promise and the shares are still likely to be valued on fundamentals. As a much more cyclical business now it has agreed to sell its restaurants operations, a small discount to the market on forecast earnings is reasonable - this implies a share price in the 300p to 320p range.

Is the bid a fair price? Yes, if not a knockout blow. At a 32 per cent premium to Forte's share price before the offer, it represents a prospective p/e ratio of 25 and as Granada's share price rises, so does the value of the offer.

At yesterday's close of 69p, almost back to its pre-bid level, Granada's share price values Forte at 388p, leaving the value of the 362p cash alternative well behind. The latter is no longer relevant with Forte's shares yesterday at 381.5p. The other full cash option, selling in the market, only makes sense if you believe either that the bid will fail or that Granada will not continue to be a good bet.

So the last question is the most important. How good an investment will Granada be? Probably a good one. The company has a plausible programme for extracting value from the Forte businesses it plans to keep. There is considerable scope to improve margins in its rental arm and substantial prospects for growth in its television operation.

With compound growth of 12 per

cent-a-year in prospect, a market rating is not a demanding price to pay for a proven management team, and a demerger further down the track could release even more value. Accept the cash and shares offer and hold on.

## Hamleys magic attracts adults

Hamleys is a name to conjure with, and not only if you are a child gazing in awe at the toys on display at the famous Regent Street store. Placed at 185p in May 1994, the shares have outperformed the rest of the market by over 60 per cent, even after yesterday's 3p fall to 335p.

The price dip came in the wake of news that underlying sales in most of Hamleys' stores registered a 5.9 per cent rise in sales in the five months to Christmas. That is less than the double-digit growth recorded by some high street retailers recently, but it is highly respectable none the less.

Christmas is obviously crucial for a

gift-orientated retailer like Hamleys. The group reckons to generate around a third of its sales between the English half-term at the end of October and Christmas Eve. As it turned out, the latest festive period was the third in a row in which it broke records.

The core Regent Street store, which still accounts for three-quarters of group sales, saw a 6.6 per cent rise in business. August to October traded ahead of the previous year and while November slipped a bit, December more than made up for it.

Elsewhere, the group's newer ventures continue to power ahead. Those trading under the Hamleys name were nearly 36 per cent up. Strong growth at Heathrow and Covent Garden and new shops at the Channel Tunnel and Schiphol airport offset lower revenues from British Airways, which gives presents to children on its flights. Hamleys also continues to expose the inadequacy of House of Fraser, where its House of Toys concession clocked up a 21 per cent like-for-like sales increase compared with little more than 2 per cent growth from the host store.

With group trading continuing to be strong into January, Hamleys looks easily capable of lifting profits by £1m to £6.2m in the 12 months to the end of this month. That makes the shares a strong hold on a forward p/e of 18.

## Careful footwork at Tottenham

Investing in football clubs is rarely a guarantee of a steady ride but the trials and tribulations that have beset shareholders in Tottenham Hotspur since it came to the market have been enough to try the patience of the most equable investor.

Tottenham's shareholders, as well as their supporters, have suffered their fair share of shocks. Football Association fines, the sudden loss of Jürgen Klinsmann, the wrangling with Terry Venables - all have buffeted the share price.

But in recent months there has been relative calm. At last Alan Sugar, the chairman, appears to be getting the business as well as the team in order and the shares have responded. In September, when the annual results were announced, the shares stood at 167p. Yesterday they were up 5p at a new high of 254p on the back of half-year results that showed profits of £2.33m, excluding player transfers, and an interim dividend payment of 1.5p per share.

Can the shares go higher still? On the downside there is the £6m or so that may be needed to develop the North Stand to take capacity at White Hart Lane up to around 37,000. Mr Sugar might decide he wants to cash in on part of his near-50 per cent investment. And the team manager, Gerry Francis, will almost certainly want to put his hand in the pot to sign new players.

Against that, the increased revenues from television, sponsorship deals and merchandising these days give football clubs a much larger potential for profits. In Tottenham's case merchandise sales, sponsorship and advertising represent 37 per cent of turnover.

Shareholders intending to buy into the stock probably need to tread as carefully as ever given its recent steady rise. On the other hand there is a growing feeling that the City is at last warming to the attractions of football clubs, viewing them more favourably as leisure businesses with real growth potential. Be warned, however, the shares are extremely illiquid.

## Simon Pincombe CITY DIARY

## Robin comes rolling out of the financial ashes

The three-wheeled Phoenix that is the Reliant Robin is rising from the ashes of insolvency - again. Reliant Motors, which went bust for the third time in four years just before Christmas, is up for sale, proving that the fire-breathing horror can still survive in the face of industrial logic after more than 60 years.

"Dealers are crying out for the car," said administrator Kevin Murphy. "So far we have had 50 inquiries for the company, some of them very serious."

Unfortunately, this sudden show of interest came too late for the bulk of the workforce. The administrators sacked 95 people only last week. That leaves Reliant - a subsidiary of the private engineering components company, Avonex - with just 12 employees and about 80 cars in production - a far cry from the halcyon days of the mid-1970s when it turned over more than £30m and employed 3,700 people in seven factories. Then the Robin (which is still taxed as a motorcycle) was being produced at 330 a week, taking a remarkable 1.25 per cent of the UK car market.

Nothing, however, could disguise the fact that the Robin had a tiny engine, uncertain road holding, limited luggage space, and a price tag that made it more expensive than many four-wheelers. And when Reliant's much-acclaimed Scimitar GT and GTE (Princess Anne did wonders for sales when she

The financial tribulations of the scatterbrained Duchess of York have the insolvency profession salivating like Pavlov's dog. John Alexander, head of insolvency at Pannell Kerr Forster, points out that the Duchess could face bankruptcy and might like to consider the more palatable alternative of an "individual voluntary arrangement". He notes that as a bankrupt the footloose one could be turfed out of her rented home PDQ. Not so under a voluntary deal where creditors could allow her time to adjust to a more frugal lifestyle.



Reliant: Halcyon days behind it, but still on the road

was caught speeding in one) began to get too long in the tooth it was downhill all they way.

Evidence emerges that Lazard Brothers is taking its role as adviser to Granada too seriously. Lunch guests at the merchant bank yesterday were astonished to be served a mixed grill consisting of bacon, kidneys, sausages, fried mushrooms and (of course) chips. Limp chips to be precise.

They'll be selling petrol next.

City advisers are moving east in their increasingly desperate search for takeover bid code names. Yesterday's £550m agreed bid by Unichem for Lloyds

Chemists provided the novel tags of Ukraine and Latvia. Students of current affairs will quickly realise that this represents a dangerous precedent that can only lead to tears before bedtime. Suppose the bid target had been dubbed Chechnya (yes, I know it doesn't begin with C, but just suppose). You can imagine the potential for confusion given the current troubles.

"It could have been a lot worse," agrees a Ukrainian adviser.

The chatter in telephone circles is that it will be an American who eventually takes on the vacant chief executive role at Cable & Wireless. The telecommunications giant has already changed its articles of association to allow a foreign-born leader and the name in the frame is Dick Callahan, the statesmanlike president of US West International, one of the biggest cable companies in the UK. Mr Callahan has the advantage that he is already based in London.

## IN BRIEF

## Losses widen at Magnum Power

Pre-tax losses at Magnum Power, the uninterruptible power supply maker, widened to £1.37m from £1.2m in the six months to November despite a sharp rise in revenues from £30,000 to £329,000. The company admitted that increased revenues had taken longer to achieve than anticipated, but said this was not uncommon for businesses marketing new technology-based products. During the half-year, there was a loss per share of 3.07p compared with a 3.36p loss the previous year. There was once again no dividend. The shares closed 4p lower at 123p.

## Neotronics in red after restructuring

Despite higher sales in all regions except North America, Neotronics, the instrumentation group, fell into the red in the year to September. After a £614,000 charge to finance large restructuring, last year's profit of £1.08m was reversed into a pre-tax loss of £680,000. The dividend was maintained at 0.85p despite a loss per share of 2.69p (3.62p profit). Paul Golley, chairman, said that the restructuring and heavy investment in Neotronics Scientific had resulted in sales and profits growth this year, which were expected to continue.

## Hill &amp; Smith improves to £5.5m

The mini-industrial conglomerate Hill & Smith Holdings saw profits jump 16.5 per cent in the year to September, despite a slowdown in the UK market for some industrial products. Pre-tax profits increased from £4.8m to £5.5m after a 14.5 per cent rise in sales to £87.8m.

After a 25 per cent increase in earnings per share to 10.78p, the dividend was maintained at 6.2p. With continued growth in Hill's new ventures in plastic pipe and pipe supports and a return to the black for its French forging business, the company forecasts further gains in the current year.

## Ashanti to mop up Cluff

Ashanti Goldfields is to compulsorily purchase the 5.5 per cent of Cluff Resources that it has not already acquired under its £80m unconditional offer for the company. Investors are being offered one Ashanti share for 12 Cluff units. There is also a cash alternative.

## Buyer wanted for UKAC

Mayne Nickless, an Australian group, is looking for a buyer for its UK armoured car division, UKAC. The business, better known under its trading names of Security Express and Armagard, employs more than 2,800 people and had a turnover of £67.5m in the year to last June. It operates 52 branches in the UK.

## Premier Land optimistic on prospects

Desmond Bloom, chairman of Premier Land, said prospects were encouraging for the property company whose assets include the Aviemore skiing resort. The portfolio is valued at £81.9m, compared with £62.6m at the end of 1994. In the absence of dealing profits, however, the group posted a pre-tax loss of £1.97m. There is no dividend.

## Trading 'positive' at Scholl

Scholl, the footwear group, said the positive trading performance of the first eight months had continued for the full year. Gordon Stevens, the chairman, said the restructuring of the business, codenamed Michael Gatenby, former head of corporate finance and vice-chairman of Charterhouse Bank, was appointed a non-executive director.

## COMPANY RESULTS

	Turnover £	Pre-tax £	EPS	Dividend
Greenwich News (P)	-	-0.20m (-0.18m)	-0.2p (-0.2p)	nil (nil)
Hutton (P)	168.4m (+61.5m)	13.81m (+2.71m)	5.36p (3.72p)	0.95p (0.73p)
Hill & Smith (P)	87.8m (+6.5m)	5.53m (+1.75m)	10.78p (8.64p)	6.2p (5.2p)
Magnum Power (P)	329m (+29.8m)	-1.37m (-1.21m)	-3.07p (-3.26p)	nil (nil)
McKay Securities (P)	-	1.40m (+1.46m)	4.4p (+4.9p)	2.1p (2.1p)
Neotronics Tech (P)	20.1m (+18.9m)	-0.68m (-1.08m)	-2.69p (-3.62p)	0.85p (0.85p)
Tottenham Hotspur (P)	20.1m (+1.7m)	2.14m (+2.08m)	34.1p (8.6p)	1.5p (nil)
Vega (P)	7.26m (+7.1m)	1.27m (+1.02m)	8.90p (+4.76p)	1.75p (+1.40p)
(P) - Profit (L) - Loss (M) - Millions (D) - Digits				

## ANZ Grindlays Base Rate

ANZ Grindlays Bank plc announces that its base rate has changed from 6.50% to 6.25% with effect from close of business 18th January 1996.

## ANZ Grindlays Bank Private Banking

13 St. James's Square, London SW1Y 4LF  
Telephone: 0171-930 4611  
Member ANZ Group

## Hill Samuel Base Rate

With effect from the close of business on Thursday 18th January, 1996 and until further notice, Hill Samuel Bank's Base Rate is

6.25% per annum

All facilities (including regulated consumer credit agreements) with a rate of interest linked to Hill Samuel Bank's Base Rate will be varied accordingly.

## HILL SAMUEL BANK

Hill Samuel Bank Limited • 100 Wood Street • London EC2P 2AJ

## Barclays Bank PLC.

Interest Rates for Business Customers, Charities and Societies with effect from 18th January 1996.

ACCOUNT TITLE	GROSS RATE (% P.A.)	NET RATE (% P.A.)
<b>BUSINESS PREMIUM ACCOUNT.</b> (Rates also apply to Premium Premium Account) - Instant access.		
£0 - £499	2.375	1.781
£500 - £1,999	2.375	1.781
£2,000 - £24,999	2.750	2.063
£25,000 - £99,999	3.250	2.438
£100,000 - £249,999	3.500	2.625
£250,000 - £1 million	3.625	2.719
<b>HIGH INTEREST BUSINESS ACCOUNT - 14 days' notice.</b>		
£2,000 - £9,999	3.375	2.531
£10,000 - £24,999	4.125	3.094
£25,000 - £99,999	4.625	3.469
£100,000 - £249,999	4.875	3.656
£250,000 +	5.000	3.750
<b>CLIENT'S PREMIUM ACCOUNT</b>		
£10,000 - £24,999	3.500	2.625
£25,000 - £99,999	3.750	2.813
£100,000 - £249,999	4.125	3.094
£250,000 - £999,999	4.250	3.188
£1 million +	4.375	3.281
<b>BARCLAYS COMMUNITY ACCOUNT.</b> (An interest bearing current account for clubs, charities, churches and societies.) No minimum balance. Interest paid quarterly.		
£0 - £4,999	0.750	0.563
£5,000 - £9,999	1.250	0.938
£10,000 - £24,999	1.750	1.313
£25,000 +	2.250	1.688
<b>SEVEN DAY DEPOSIT ACCOUNT.</b> (A seven days' notice account.) No minimum balance. Interest paid half-yearly.		
	0.500	0.375

\*GROSS RATE is the contractual rate of interest payable not taking account of the deduction of income tax at the basic rate.

\*NET RATE is the rate which would be payable after allowing for the deduction of income tax at the current basic rate from the gross rate. Basic Rate Tax (BRT) may vary and therefore the net rate is given as an illustration only. BRT will only be deducted in those cases where the Bank is obliged to do so.

Interest rates quoted are subject to variation. For further information on these or any other services please contact your local Barclays branch or Business Centre who will be pleased to help.

## BARCLAYS

Barclays Bank PLC. Reg. London, England. Reg. No. 1026107. Reg. Office: 54 Lombard Street, London EC3P 3AH.



## market report/shares

TAKING STOCK

## DATA BANK

FT-SE 100  
3,748.7 +44.5

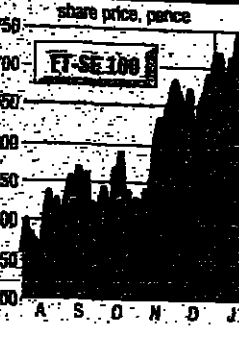
FT-SE 250  
4,058.2 +22.6

FT-SE 350  
1,857.4 +19.5

SEAQ VOLUME  
945.6m shares,  
40,027 bargains

Gifts Index  
96.34 +0.47

## SHARE SPOTLIGHT



## Record day leaves investors waiting for more rate cuts

Records were smashed yesterday as the Chancellor surprised the market with a quarter-point cut in interest rates. The FT-SE 100 closed at an all-time high of 3,748.7, up 44.5 points on the day. Trading was heavy with almost 950 million shares changing hands in 40,000 deals.

Rumoured and actual takeover activity provided a further fillip to the session. The advance in prices was not confined to the leaders; the FT-SE 250 index registered a 22.6 point advance to 4,058.2. The rate cut may have been a surprise, but investors were yesterday anticipating further reduction in the near future. Gilt-edged stocks finished the day with gains of up to half a point. Bank shares fared better than most, with the Chancellor's move. Barclays added 9.5p to 769.5p, Lloyds TSB improved 14.5p to 340.5p, and NatWest closed 12.5p higher at 667.5p.

Standard Chartered, meanwhile, advanced 15p to 590p on further rumours of a sale of its Asian securities business to Nava Finance of Thailand.

The waft of cheaper money whetted appetites on the retailing pitch. The principal high street groups made useful advances, notably Argos, up 4p to 579p, Kingfisher, ahead 6p to 544p, and Marks and Spencer, which rose 8.5p to 446.5p.

Only 11 of the leading 100 shares recorded falls. Guinness, down 14.5p to 474.5p, was the biggest faller after wrongfooting investors with a further 53p reorganisation charge, principally relating to its Cruzcampo brewing business in Spain. The fallout from the charge, which led analysts to downgrade forecasts, and a flat trading statement affected Allied Domecq, which slipped 2p to 539p.

Several drinks analysts lowered profit forecasts for Guinness to around £900m, but



## MARKET REPORT

JOHN SHEPHERD

some said further adjustments to the numbers might be necessary. The news winkled out plenty of sellers, and by the close of play more than 10.5 million Guinness shares were traded.

For the rest of the leaders, there was only one direction—upwards. British Aerospace climbed 29.5p to 864.5p, largely on the back of the Henderson Crosthwaite broking house advising clients to buy after estimating a break-up value for the group of £12 a share.

Brian Newman, an analyst at Henderson, reckoned the defence activities were alone worth around £4.8bn—equal to 14 times earnings. He predicts BAe shares will continue

to rise, seeing a medium-term price of around £10.50.

Speculation about the next takeover targets increased as Unilever, up 19.5p to 258.5p, rolled out its expected agreed £546m bid for T. J. Lloyds Chemists, up 35p to 401p. The deal will make Unilever the largest high street chemist in terms of the number of outlets, but second behind Boots, a penny firmer at 597p, when measured in turnover terms.

Body Shop recovered the ground lost from this week's downturn trading statement and finished the day at 154p, up 3p. The outbreak of the petrol price war, however, sent Frost Group down 16p to 155p,

and a poor trading report unsettled WWT, which shed 1.5p to 155p.

Rumours about a possible takeover of Vaux, the Sunderland-based regional brewer, refused to die down. Vaux climbed 10p to 299p, a high for 1996 and just a penny below last year's peak. Wolverhampton & Dudley, viewed by some observers as a suitor, held steady at 592p.

There was plenty of takeover gossip elsewhere to keep speculators happy. Sims Food group, which fell out of bed after announcing another profits warning on Wednesday, was in demand and climbed 7p to 38p on talk of a possible bid move by Global Group, off 0.5p to 17.5p.

The specialty chemicals group European Colour increased 6.5p to 90.5p on talk of a bid from Laporte, unchanged at 663p.

Shares in Geest, which recently sold its bananas business to Fryfles, were lively as some institutional buyers appeared. The price shot up 13p to a two-year high of 237p.

The rise sparked fresh rumours that Geest, principally a prepared foods group, would soon fall to a takeover bid. Hillside Holdings, which firmed 2p to 179p, is the main name in the speculative frame.

Surrey Free Inns, the pub company traded on AIM, finished 2p better at 127p amid some talk that analysts may have to upgrade already bullish profit expectations. Analysts are expecting taxable profits of up to £1.2m for the current year to May. Surrey is reported to be one of the best run of the new-style pub companies, and there is a growing belief that it could become a bid target.

The Savoy Group, up a full pound on Wednesday, gained 10p to £11.30 and looks set to be a takeover target if Granada takes Forte under its wing. Stakis remained in demand, gaining 2p to 87p with more than 3.8 million shares traded.

Other bright spots included Tottenham Hotspur, 14p higher at 254p on solid interim figures, and Fairy Group, ahead 13p to 57p as James Capel advised clients to buy.

## Share Price Data

Prices are in sterling except where stated. The yield is last year's dividend, grossed up by 20 per cent, as a percentage of the share price. The price/earnings (P/E) ratio is the share price divided by last year's earnings per share, excluding exceptional items. Other details: x Ex rights x Ex dividend as Exalt x Unlisted Securities Market x Suspended x Party Paid p.m. Nil Paid Shares.

## The Independent Index

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Calls cost 39p per minute (cheap rate), and 49p at all other times. Call charges include

## Market leaders: Top 20 volumes

Stock	Volume	Stock	Volume	Stock	Volume	Stock	Volume
Fort	500000	BT	400000	Prudential	180000	HSBC (2p/sh)	720000
British Gas	200000	Hanson	120000	NatWest Bank	60000	British Steel	60000
National Grid	200000	Vodafone	100000	South Power	20000	Shell	60000
British Telecom	200000	Guinness	100000	Glaxo Wellcome	75000	Shell Transport	60000
Lloyds TSB	100000						

## FT-SE 100 index hour by hour

Open 3710 up 6.8	11.00 3722 up 20.0	14.00 3740 up 36.2
High 3710 up 6.8	12.00 3728 up 26.8	15.00 3748 up 40.7
Low 3700 up 2.0	13.00 3737 up 30.5	16.00 3758 up 51.0
Close 3720 up 22.8		Close 3748 up 44.5

High	Low	Price	Chg	Vol	High	Low	Price	Chg	Vol
<b>Banks, Merchant</b>									
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
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340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
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340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
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340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
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340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
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340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
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340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5	+14.5	150000	HSBC	250.0	+1.0	80000	
340.5	340.5	340.5</							

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
<b>Engineering</b>						
British Aerospace	864.5	+29.5	150000			
Rolls Royce	450.0	+10.0	100000			
BAE Systems	120.0	+2.0	80000			
BAE Systems	120.0	+2.0	80000			
BAE Systems	120.0	+2.0	80000			

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
<b>Food Manufacturers</b>						
Unilever	258.5	+19.5	100000			
Unilever	258.5	+19.5	100000			
Unilever	258.5	+19.5	100000			
Unilever	258.5	+19.5	100000			
Unilever	258.5	+19.5	100000			

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
<b>Household Goods</b>						
Argos	579.0	+4.0	100000			
Argos	579.0	+4.0	100000			
Argos	579.0	+4.0	100000			
Argos	579.0	+4.0	100000			
Argos	579.0	+4.0	100000			

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
<b>Electronics</b>						
British Telecom	2000.0	+10.0	100000			
British Telecom	2000.0	+10.0	100000			
British Telecom	2000.0	+10.0	100000			
British Telecom	2000.0	+10.0	100000			
British Telecom	2000.0	+10.0	100000			

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
<b>Telecommunications</b>						
British Telecom	2000.0	+10.0	100000			
British Telecom	2000.0	+10.0	100000			
British Telecom	2000.0	+10.0	100000			
British Telecom	2000.0	+10.0	100000			
British Telecom	2000.0	+10.0	100000			

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
<b>Textiles &amp; Apparel</b>						
Next	120.0	+2.0	100000			
Next	120.0	+2.0	100000			
Next	120.0	+2.0	100000			
Next	120.0	+2.0	100000			
Next	120.0	+2.0	100000			

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
<b>Transport</b>						
British Airways	100.0	+2.0	100000			
British Airways	100.0	+2.0	100000			
British Airways	100.0	+2.0	100000			
British Airways	100.0	+2.0	100000			
British Airways	100.0	+2.0	100000			

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
<b>Investment Companies</b>						
Investment Company	100.0	+2.0	100000			
Investment Company	100.0	+2.0	100000			
Investment Company	100.0	+2.0	100000			
Investment Company	100.0	+2.0	100000			
Investment Company	100.0	+2.0	100000			

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
<b>Investment Trusts</b>						
Investment Trust	100.0	+2.0	100000			
Investment Trust	100.0	+2.0	100000			
Investment Trust	100.0	+2.0	100000			
Investment Trust	100.0	+2.0	100000			
Investment Trust	100.0	+2.0	100000			

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Price	Chg	Vol
<b>Life Assurance</b>						
Life Assurance	100.0	+2.0	100000			
Life Assurance	100.0	+2.0	100000			
Life Assurance	100.0	+2.0	100000			
Life Assurance	100.0	+2.0	100000			
Life Assurance	100.0	+2.0	100000			

Stock	Price	Chg	Vol	Stock	Price	Chg	Vol
<b>Index-linked</b>							
100							



Foreign Exchange Rates

STERLING				DOLLAR				D-MARK	
Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	Country	Spot	1 month	3 months	Country	Spot
US	1538	1-9	30-37	UK	130C	0-3	0-6	FR	0885
Canada	23739	2-4	50-57	Canada	0265	25-23	73-72	UK	13273
Germany	22294	2-6	55-64	Germany	0265	25-23	73-72	Canada	09200
France	1252	55-59	57-67	France	5023	55-56	55-56	Germany	10787
Italy	16527	71-72	220-231	Italy	5023	55-56	55-56	France	71882
Japan	16285	86-91	237-243	Japan	5023	55-56	55-56	Italy	58-59
ECU	12195	1-7	37-38	ECU	1259	2-4	5-6	Japan	1-12
Belgium	1252	55-59	57-67	Belgium	31025	57-57	57-57	ECU	13920
Netherlands	1252	55-59	57-67	Netherlands	31025	57-57	57-57	Belgium	13920
Denmark	1252	55-59	57-67	Denmark	31025	57-57	57-57	Netherlands	13920
Sweden	1252	55-59	57-67	Sweden	31025	57-57	57-57	Denmark	13920
Switzerland	1252	55-59	57-67	Switzerland	31025	57-57	57-57	Sweden	13920
Australia	1252	55-59	57-67	Australia	31025	57-57	57-57	Switzerland	13920
New Zealand	1252	55-59	57-67	New Zealand	31025	57-57	57-57	Australia	13920
Singapore	1252	55-59	57-67	Singapore	31025	57-57	57-57	New Zealand	13920

OTHER SPOT RATES			
Country	Spot	Country	Spot
Argentina	1538	Nigeria	130C
Australia	1252	Philippines	130C
Canada	23739	Portugal	130C
Denmark	1252	Spain	130C
France	1252	Sweden	130C
Germany	1252	Switzerland	130C
Italy	16527	Thailand	130C
Japan	16285	Turkey	130C
Netherlands	1252	USA	130C
Sweden	1252		
Switzerland	1252		
USA	130C		

Interest Rates			
Country	Rate	Country	Rate
UK	5.5%	US	6.75%
France	5.0%	Japan	5.0%
Germany	5.0%	Canada	5.0%
Italy	8.0%	Australia	5.0%
Netherlands	5.0%	Denmark	5.0%
Sweden	5.0%	Switzerland	5.0%
Australia	5.0%	USA	5.0%

Bond Yields

Country	Yield	Country	Yield
UK	5.5%	US	6.75%
France	5.0%	Japan	5.0%
Germany	5.0%	Canada	5.0%
Italy	8.0%	Australia	5.0%
Netherlands	5.0%	Denmark	5.0%
Sweden	5.0%	Switzerland	5.0%
Australia	5.0%	USA	5.0%

Money Market Rates

Country	Rate	Country	Rate
UK	5.5%	US	6.75%
France	5.0%	Japan	5.0%
Germany	5.0%	Canada	5.0%
Italy	8.0%	Australia	5.0%
Netherlands	5.0%	Denmark	5.0%
Sweden	5.0%	Switzerland	5.0%
Australia	5.0%	USA	5.0%

Liffe Financial Futures

Contract	Price	Contract	Price
Long Oil	10.10	Short Oil	10.10
German Bund	101.10	Short Bund	101.10
US Gov Bond	102.10	Short Gov Bond	102.10
US Treasury	103.10	Short Treasury	103.10
3M Euro	104.10	Short 3M Euro	104.10
3M Euro	105.10	Short 3M Euro	105.10
3M Euro	106.10	Short 3M Euro	106.10
3M Euro	107.10	Short 3M Euro	107.10
3M Euro	108.10	Short 3M Euro	108.10
3M Euro	109.10	Short 3M Euro	109.10
3M Euro	110.10	Short 3M Euro	110.10
3M Euro	111.10	Short 3M Euro	111.10
3M Euro	112.10	Short 3M Euro	112.10
3M Euro	113.10	Short 3M Euro	113.10
3M Euro	114.10	Short 3M Euro	114.10
3M Euro	115.10	Short 3M Euro	115.10
3M Euro	116.10	Short 3M Euro	116.10
3M Euro	117.10	Short 3M Euro	117.10
3M Euro	118.10	Short 3M Euro	118.10
3M Euro	119.10	Short 3M Euro	119.10
3M Euro	120.10	Short 3M Euro	120.10
3M Euro	121.10	Short 3M Euro	121.10
3M Euro	122.10	Short 3M Euro	122.10
3M Euro	123.10	Short 3M Euro	123.10
3M Euro	124.10	Short 3M Euro	124.10
3M Euro	125.10	Short 3M Euro	125.10
3M Euro	126.10	Short 3M Euro	126.10
3M Euro	127.10	Short 3M Euro	127.10
3M Euro	128.10	Short 3M Euro	128.10
3M Euro	129.10	Short 3M Euro	129.10
3M Euro	130.10	Short 3M Euro	130.10
3M Euro	131.10	Short 3M Euro	131.10
3M Euro	132.10	Short 3M Euro	132.10
3M Euro	133.10	Short 3M Euro	133.10
3M Euro	134.10	Short 3M Euro	134.10
3M Euro	135.10	Short 3M Euro	135.10
3M Euro	136.10	Short 3M Euro	136.10
3M Euro	137.10	Short 3M Euro	137.10
3M Euro	138.10	Short 3M Euro	138.10
3M Euro	139.10	Short 3M Euro	139.10
3M Euro	140.10	Short 3M Euro	140.10
3M Euro	141.10	Short 3M Euro	141.10
3M Euro	142.10	Short 3M Euro	142.10
3M Euro	143.10	Short 3M Euro	143.10
3M Euro	144.10	Short 3M Euro	144.10
3M Euro	145.10	Short 3M Euro	145.10
3M Euro	146.10	Short 3M Euro	146.10
3M Euro	147.10	Short 3M Euro	147.10
3M Euro	148.10	Short 3M Euro	148.10
3M Euro	149.10	Short 3M Euro	149.10
3M Euro	150.10	Short 3M Euro	150.10
3M Euro	151.10	Short 3M Euro	151.10
3M Euro	152.10	Short 3M Euro	152.10
3M Euro	153.10	Short 3M Euro	153.10
3M Euro	154.10	Short 3M Euro	154.10
3M Euro	155.10	Short 3M Euro	155.10
3M Euro	156.10	Short 3M Euro	156.10
3M Euro	157.10	Short 3M Euro	157.10
3M Euro	158.10	Short 3M Euro	158.10
3M Euro	159.10	Short 3M Euro	159.10
3M Euro	160.10	Short 3M Euro	160.10
3M Euro	161.10	Short 3M Euro	161.10
3M Euro	162.10	Short 3M Euro	162.10
3M Euro	163.10	Short 3M Euro	163.10
3M Euro	164.10	Short 3M Euro	164.10
3M Euro	165.10	Short 3M Euro	165.10
3M Euro	166.10	Short 3M Euro	166.10
3M Euro	167.10	Short 3M Euro	167.10
3M Euro	168.10	Short 3M Euro	168.10
3M Euro	169.10	Short 3M Euro	169.10
3M Euro	170.10	Short 3M Euro	170.10
3M Euro	171.10	Short 3M Euro	171.10
3M Euro	172.10	Short 3M Euro	172.10
3M Euro	173.10	Short 3M Euro	173.10
3M Euro	174.10	Short 3M Euro	174.10
3M Euro	175.10	Short 3M Euro	175.10
3M Euro	176.10	Short 3M Euro	176.10
3M Euro	177.10	Short 3M Euro	177.10
3M Euro	178.10	Short 3M Euro	178.10
3M Euro	179.10	Short 3M Euro	179.10
3M Euro	180.10	Short 3M Euro	180.10
3M Euro	181.10	Short 3M Euro	181.10
3M Euro	182.10	Short 3M Euro	182.10
3M Euro	183.10	Short 3M Euro	183.10
3M Euro	184.10	Short 3M Euro	184.10
3M Euro	185.10	Short 3M Euro	185.10
3M Euro	186.10	Short 3M Euro	186.10
3M Euro	187.10	Short 3M Euro	187.10
3M Euro	188.10	Short 3M Euro	188.10
3M Euro	189.10	Short 3M Euro	189.10
3M Euro	190.10	Short 3M Euro	190.10
3M Euro	191.10	Short 3M Euro	191.10
3M Euro	192.10	Short 3M Euro	192.10
3M Euro	193.10	Short 3M Euro	193.10
3M Euro	194.10	Short 3M Euro	194.10
3M Euro	195.10	Short 3M Euro	195.10
3M Euro	196.10	Short 3M Euro	196.10
3M Euro	197.10	Short 3M Euro	197.10
3M Euro	198.10	Short 3M Euro	198.10
3M Euro	199.10	Short 3M Euro	199.10
3M Euro	200.10	Short 3M Euro	200.10
3M Euro	201.10	Short 3M Euro	201.10
3M Euro	202.10	Short 3M Euro	202.10
3M Euro	203.10	Short 3M Euro	203.10
3M Euro	204.10	Short 3M Euro	204.10
3M Euro	205.10	Short 3M Euro	205.10
3M Euro	206.10	Short 3M Euro	206.10
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## Hoskin flies in for Garcia

## Hockey

**BILL COLWILL**  
reports from Barcelona

Garcia, who won a gold medal as part of Britain's triumphant 1988 Olympic side, has contracted a severe bout of gastroenteritis.

ifying tournament. They face a tough start when, in their opening match, they meet an Indian team who have just beaten the world champions, Pakistan.

and Holland, who are officially ranked second in the world. Five of the eight competing nations will earn tickets to At-

lanta to join the seven countries who have qualified already. Also competing in Barcelona are Spain, Belgium, Malaysia, Belarus and Canada - all ranked below Britain.

**ENGLAND SQUAD** (Olympic qualifying tournament, Barcelona): S Mason (Reading), D Luckless (East Grinstead) J Wynter (Reading), J Halls (Old Loughtonians), Simon Singh (Surrey), G Fordham (Hounslow), K Tisdale (Canoe), S Hazell (Hounslow), C Meyer (Canoe).

**Warp** turns

## Warne turns the tide for Australia

### Cricket

Shane Warne transformed yesterday's opening match of the best-of-three World Series final as Australia beat Sri Lanka by 18 runs.

The tourists appeared to be cruising to victory at the Melbourne Cricket Ground before Warne took two key wickets. Chasing Australia's moderate

total of 201 for 7, Sri Lanka lost six middle-order wickets for 25 runs to lose their way, being dismissed for 183 in 48.1 overs.

Yorkshire's Michael Bevan and Ricky Ponting rescued Australia with determined half-centuries after a top-order collapse left them on 39 for 4. Ian Healy completed the recovery with an undefeated 50 off 51 balls.

When Warne came on to bowl Sri Lanka, having reached 78 for 2 after 17 overs, lost the vital wickets of vice-captain Ar-

Craig McDermott then lured Asanka Gurusinha into a rash

**TODAY'S  
FIXTURES**

**Football**

**LEAGUE OF WALES:** Holywell v Connah's Quay  
7.30pm

**IRISH PREMIER DIVISION**

**DUBLIN GAIS LEAGUE OF IRELAND Premier Div**

**Rugby League**

**English**

**International CHAMPIONS:** Sheffield Eagles v Wigan (7-0).

**Rugby Union**

**A INTERNATIONALS:** France v England (16-0) at Jean Bouin Stadium, Paris; Ireland v Scotland (19-18) at Murrayfield, Edinburgh.

**EUROPEAN CUP:** Ireland v Scotland (12-0) at Glasgow Celtic College.

**Other sports**

**BASKETBALL:** Juventus League v Newcastle v Borussia Dortmund Bursaphysic (television total score 10-10).

**SNOKKER** Embassy World Championship qualifiers (Blackpool)

**TODAY'S  
NUMBER**

**12,000**

The record number of tickets snapped up in the first week of sale for the World Indoor

Bowls Championship at Preston Guild Hall, which runs from 12-25 February. The last

three days are already a sell-out.

\_\_\_\_\_



# sport

**FIVE NATIONS' CHAMPIONSHIP:** England tackle France without Brian Moore tomorrow. **Jim White** meets the man they called pit-bull

## The solicitor who thrived in the trenches

For a decade it was as terrifying a sight as any in international sport: Brian Moore, England's most capped hooker, exploding from the players' tunnel on to the pitch at the start of a Five Nations' Championship game.

Extremities coated in vaseline and swathed in masking tape, he snarled out to do the business for his country, issuing an overt physical statement which said: "This Englishman is dangerous". What routines, you might wonder, did Brian Moore go through to arrive at such a state of wired motivation? Decorating the dressing room with portraits of Churchill, Wellington and Richard the Lion Heart? Spending a day in a management seminar with Will Carling?

"Actually," he says, sitting in his solicitor's suit in his smart city office, not a scrap of vaseline in sight. "I didn't have to work at getting myself motivated. Really it was a case of scaling it down and trying to keep control."

Which makes you wonder: what might have happened if Brian Moore had given vent to his true feelings? This year French hearts will be significantly lifted by the absence of the crazed Moore. His services no longer required by Jack Rowell, the man who more than any epitomised the uncompromising spirit on which Gallic ambitions so often foundered will be watching instead from the press box.

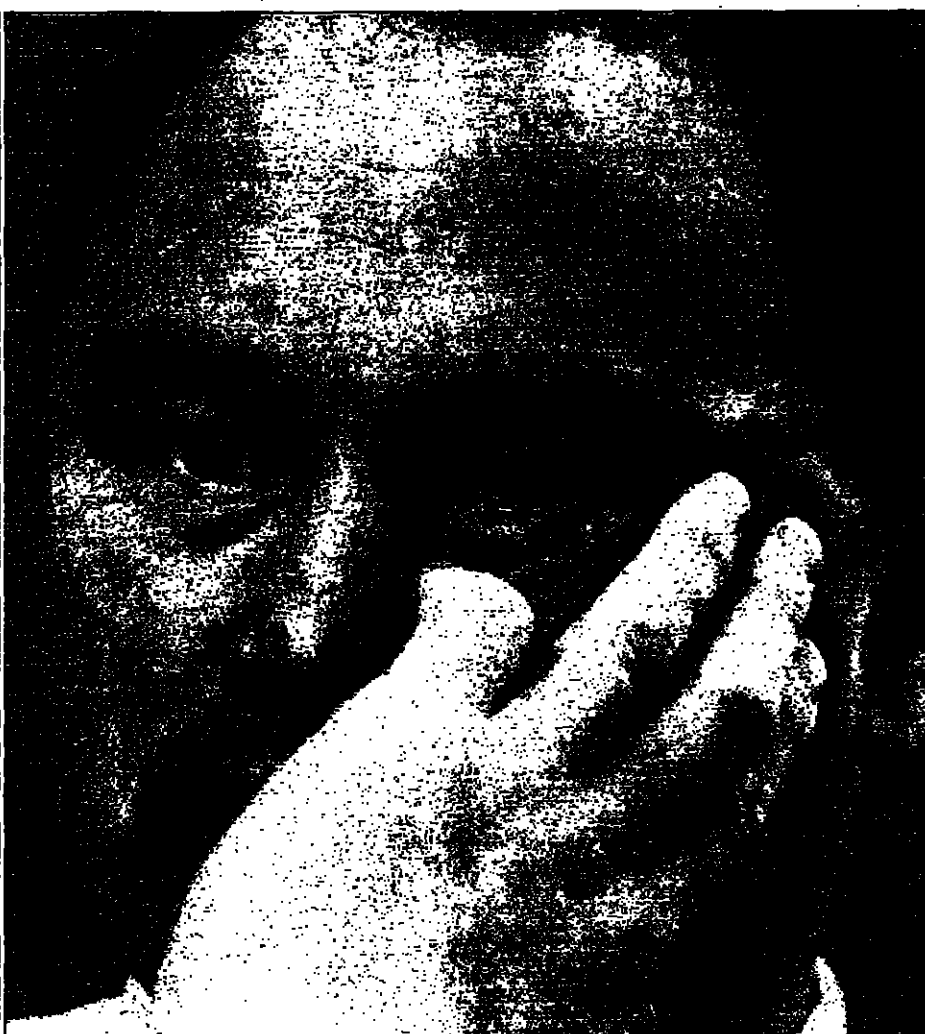
"When they run out at Parc des Princes, it will be difficult," he says. "I'll know what the morning's been like, the coach journey, the descent into the changing rooms, the feeling of expectation as you set out towards the field, then the moment you break up into the stadium. That moment, it's the most thrilling thing."

And for him there was more to it than simply the heady realisation that 60,000 pairs of eyes were focused in his direction. Brian Moore played all his international rugby as if it were the continuation of a millennium of internecine rivalry, of which the battle against the French was the big one.

"It is a very seductive fixture," he says. "Southern Hemisphere teams may be technically more challenging opponents, but what they can't offer compared



The two sides of Brian Moore: The hooker who spread fear throughout rugby and the thinker, committed to his profession



Photographs: Daily Mirror/David Ashdown

to any Five Nations match, however hard they try to denigrate it as a competition, is 1,000 years of history. England-France is very special; it isn't too fanciful to say, if you scratch below the surface, there's an ancient rivalry of such intensity it is bound to be an extra factor."

Neither would it be too fanciful to suggest that Moore's 14 colleagues did not similarly regard the game as a chance to settle scores left unresolved from the Battle of Agincourt. But then few of them have analysed quite as thoroughly as he has the connotations of pulling on the fly-white jersey.

"The thing about playing for England is that every opponent you face brings all sorts of baggage with them about wanting to beat you. Take Scotland in

1990" - he says the words through gritted, if patchwork, teeth, remembering his lowest sporting moment, losing that Grand Slam encounter at Murrayfield - "it was the height of the poll tax, we were cast as representatives of a system which the Scots felt had been imposed upon them. It definitely helped their motivation. When you've had to face over nationalism, it draws a sense of your own identity further forward, simply to counter it." And the sense of his own identity Moore arrived at was passionately English, an attitude which is reinforced by much greater suspicion than its Welsh, Irish or Scots equivalent.

Hence he was cast as pit-bull, the brainless yob. An image which was reinforced by a tendency to speak out of turn.

"I wasn't good at keeping quiet," he says. "I always felt a sense of injustice. I wasn't prepared to let it go and if it caused annoyance, c'est la vie." Did he ever regret anything he had said?

"No." Not even his remarks about the Scots after last year's confrontation, when he accused them of spoiling the game, thus provoking the ire of everyone who has ever worn a kilt?

"Not at all. And I'll tell you why," he says. "Because I was right. If you ask most rugby-playing Scots candidly, they will admit I was right. But the flak I took for saying it was incredible. John Beattie, the ex-Scotland flanker, wrote the most personal, vitriolic article about me after that I have ever seen about any sportsman.

It wasn't libellous, because sheer abuse is not libel. And this year he rang up asking for an interview. It begged belief. I sent him a letter saying if he thinks he can write articles like that, and then get people to co-operate later, then he's insane."

So Moore's not a man to forget an insult in a hurry, then. "You use that. Like that Clive Rowlands quote," he says, referring to the former Welsh coach's remarks when Wales were knocked out of the first World Cup about how they'll just go back to the important business of beating England every year.

"That really riled. And I think it helped us as a team, on our way up, to have a few scores to settle. But didn't his opponents ever have a score to settle with him? 'If you're in the front

row," he says, "then you're a target. If you're on the floor, they'll tread on you whoever you are. But I guess it would have brought a bit more satisfaction to most people when they realised it was me down there they'd just done."

Not that Brian Moore has ever really objected to his image. He is cunning enough to use it to his advantage, particularly in his professional life.

"People always assumed I didn't do the work," he says. "They thought I was just on the letterhead, there to get senior partner match tickets. And legal opponents often underestimate me, thinking I haven't got the brain power. Ironically, in professional life I'm quite guarded. I couldn't be a loose cannon here, it's just too important. I think that was the great thing

about my job, because it is so demanding. If you had mental discipline to compartmentalise properly, it was a very good distraction from rugby. The week before we played the All Blacks at Twickenham in 1993, I was working on a multi-million pound professional negligence claim that just had to be finished before the weekend and I sent my last fax at 12.30 the Friday night, went to bed knackered, got up and the game was just there. Some people had two or three days chomping with nerves."

Which, coming from one of the most vociferous proponents of professionalism in rugby, sounds like a good argument for keeping a day job.

"In the days when I played, it was the right thing to do," he says. "The problem now is that

teams who play fully professionally are able to devote so much more time to fitness and organisation, that intellectual discipline is neither here nor there. I used to train two hours a day, but it was at the end of a long working day, the cumulative benefits of training were not as great as if I approached the task fresh. You talk to the Wigan rugby league boys, compared to what they did, our regime was a joke. They have quality training, and as importantly, quality resting. If you want to compete, we have to give our players that. Typically the RFU are going about it in a penny-pinching way, which means a lot of our players will be financially tempted to keep on their jobs, thus negating the whole point."

The big question for a man as bright and committed to his profession as Brian Moore is why did he spend 17 years of his life weekly putting his head into the bad place?

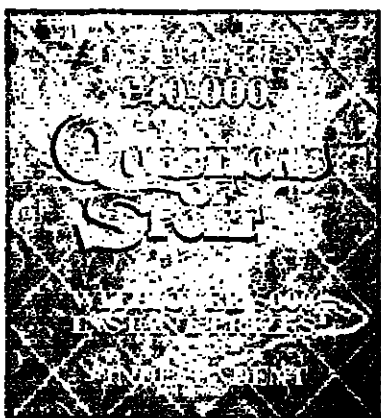
"Maybe it's a release for excess testosterone," he says. "For that period in my life I needed a physical outlet. It was driven from within me. Plus in very few walks of life do you get to a situation where you win or lose."

So why did the man who would never shrink a challenge, retire so soon after being dropped by England? Particularly as Jack Rowell had made it clear he could fight his way back into the scrum?

"They said that but, candidly, it seemed apparent it was over for me," he says. "It does sound childish, because I've had a lot of pleasure out of club rugby, but when the big prize of England wasn't there it just didn't interest me anymore. I was, however, absolutely petrified of retiring. I was desperately worried what would replace it in my life. But in the end it came down to this. Thursday night training is sacrosanct for a rugby player, never to be missed. And I found I could only get tickets to go and see the *Nutcracker* at the Festival Hall on a Thursday. And I said to myself: 'What would you rather be doing, honestly?' And I thought sod it, and went. And that was it. I knew, if I felt that, it was the time to get out. Christ, it makes me sound like a candidate for Pseud's Corner."

Brian Moore in Pseud's Corner? That would be a turn-up.

## Questions of Sport



**£40,000 to be won**

Today we are giving you another sporting chance of an instant win. In last Saturday's paper, there was a Questions of Sport multi-choice scratch card which, if you answer three sporting questions correctly, gives you the chance of an instant cash prize from £1 to £1,000. You don't have to be an obsessive fan to play - a good general sporting knowledge should suffice. But remember, you only get one chance to answer each question, so if you are in any doubt, check it out. In tomorrow's Independent we will give you a new Questions of Sport scratch card. Like your last card, it contains eight games so that you can play daily through to Friday 26 January. As well as the daily instant cash prizes there is a weekly accumulator prize of £5,000 waiting to be won.

### HOW TO PLAY

Today we are playing the section of the card dated Friday 19 January. Below are three sporting questions, each with three possible answers coded as A, B and C. Scratch off your answer to question twenty-two, either A, B or C in the Q22 column then repeat for Q23 and Q24.

### THE QUESTIONS

**Q22 Who topped the England batting averages in the recent Test series against South Africa?**

- A: Mike Atherton
- B: Jack Russell
- C: Robin Smith

**Q23 Which British Formula One driver has opted to join the Indy-car circuit for the 1996 season?**

- A: Damon Hill
- B: Martin Brundle
- C: Mark Blundell

**Q24 Who retired this month after 25 years as head coach of the Miami Dolphins?**

- A: Mike Ditka
- B: Don Shula
- C: Vince Lombardi

### IMPORTANT

If you reveal three identical cash amounts on any one game section on any one day, you win that amount. After you have played the last game on your card, total the cash amounts you have revealed. If your total is £5,000 you win or share the £5,000 accumulator prize. You could also win today's instant prize of £100 by revealing an asterisk.

### HOW TO CLAIM

If you have revealed three identical cash amounts of £5 or under, DO NOT PHONE. Take the claim coupon OR a piece of plain paper with your name and address on it PLUS the relevant section of the card to one of the newsagents listed below. For prizes over £5, phone 01254 683666 (Irish Republic 0044 1254 683666) between 10.30am and 4pm today. Participating newsagents: WH Smith, John Menzies, Forbuys, Martins/RS, McColl/Dillons, Gibbs, Macs, Super-cigs, United News Shops, Star News, K Bellfour, Eason, GT News, Paper-chain - Village Store, Paper Shop. If you have any difficulty redeeming your card and coupon for a prize send both to: Independent Questions of Sport, claims, PO Box 60, Burnley, BB10 1SH.

**RULES AS PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED**

### SOME OF OUR WINNERS SO FAR:

- Derim Cassim from Pwllheli, Wales - £250
- Thomas Finch from Platt Bridge, Wigan - £100
- Maurice Pearson from Horsforth, Leeds - £100
- Roger Bryant from Wrexham - £25
- Clayton West, Huddersfield - £100
- Raymond Thomas from Wirral, Merseyside - £100
- Peter Penryman from Otley, West Yorks - £50
- Lyn Gray from Gargrave, Nr. Skipton - £25
- Michael Wright from Wrexham - £25
- Martina Shuttleworth from Leigh, Lancashire - £10

### QUESTIONS OF SPORT CLAIM COUPON

Friday 19 January 1996  
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To the Newsagent: Please check the card is correct and give the reader the value of their prize. Send this coupon or details supplied on plain paper together with the winning card to your head office for full redemption.

## Ireland primed and eager to justify the optimism

Is that the discernible sound of optimism in the air? A new coach, a new attitude, and a couple of preparatory wins have prompted a rash of bets on the Five Nations' Championship and a belief that Twickenham on St Patrick's weekend will constitute a Triple Crown decider. This morning, this is Ireland.

We have been here before as well, most noticeably last season with premature talk of a legendary front-row in the making. Under-prepared, Ireland under-achieved, and the only manle they ended up playing for was the wooden spoon in the Cardiff Arms Park denouement to another anti-climactic campaign.

However, this time things might just be different, and Ireland might be worth taking seriously if only because they seem to be taking themselves seriously. For starters, it is arguable that no other team needed the onset of the professional more.

With their conservative Union bosses dragged along, kicking and screaming, into the new era, suddenly Irish rugby began catching up with its counterparts and remunerating its international players. The agreement reached last week enables each of the 30 squad members to earn from £7,500 up to £30,000.

Now both the practice, as well as the theories, are professional, which is no less than Ireland's first professional, and overseas coach, demands. Murray Kidd, the 42-year-old from Auckland who has coached at club level in his native country, France and Ireland, was a surprise choice last October to succeed Gerry Murphy after Bob Dwyer and John Connolly had rejected the IRFU's coventous advances. A one-season contract was less than a winking endorsement.

In his one stint at provincial level last season, Kidd lasted less than a year at unfashionable King Country due, in part, to the players' discontentment with his stringent training regime. On the other side of the coin, he was fitter than most of them.

Though known as a tough taskmaster, the Irish players have responded to Kidd's more intense training sessions. "I do things that the players weren't used to. Our training sessions are

A new coach with a professional approach has a nation expecting victory against Scotland tomorrow. **David Hughes** reports

reasonably short, generally not more than an hour and a half, but they know they've been out there for an hour and a half." One of Kidd's biggest achievements was to secure a hastily arranged Five Nations' New Year warm-up in Atlanta. Leinster had played Cardiff the day before yet, upon arrival, the squad went through a fierce two-hour session. The players were told that to opt out would, in Kidd's own words, be to wimp out.

The benefits of the rigorous regime were almost immediate in the hard-earned win over the United States. "It instilled a kind of confidence," according to Neil Francis, outstanding in Leinster's 10-match winning sequence this season and widely acclaimed as man of the match in that sudden triumph over the United States. "It was the team that was playing last year, it might have been different."

With the equally well-respected John Mitchell installed as the forwards coach (dropped passes result in punitive sprinting drills) the fitness of the team shone through against a gargantuan American pack (average weight - over 17 stone). Likewise, Ireland had been noticeably fitter and more focused in disposing of Fiji last November, and were clearly developing a pattern of play based on ball retention rather than the age-old Irish ploy of bootin', bitin' and bollockin'.



Murray Kidd: Concentrating on fitness

Photograph: Inpho

Even in the scarcely playable conditions in Atlanta, Eric Elwood hardly kicked a ball at outside-half before the sodden surface and ball dictated a change of tack. For once declining to adopt the perennial underdog's tag so beloved of the Irish, Kidd admits his team have "a better than even chance in our home games" against Scotland and Wales, but still desires victory with at least a degree of style.

"I think those are games we've got to go out and attack. I don't want to not lose them. I want to go out and win them."

The selection of the slick-passing Sale scrum-half Chris Saverimuttu this season was a clear statement of intent. The recall of Eric Elwood for the States' game and his retention ahead of Paul Burke for the forthcoming just with Scotland may seem a contradiction, but Kidd also places great store on sound tackling. With one eye on the straight-running Ian Jardine and Scott Hastings, Elwood was preferred.

Bearing in mind Doddie Weir's eclipse of Francis four years ago, similarly there was a horses-for-courses thinking behind Peter Clohesy's recall at the expense of the unlucky Paul Wallace. Pat Whelan, the team manager, makes no bones about it. "Clohesy's abrasiveness was an important consideration, because we believe this is something Scotland will recognise."

With Clohesy adding more protection to Francis, Ireland's line-out has been further strengthened by the recall of the 21-year-old lock Jeremy Davidson to No 6. This leaves David Corry as the shortest of the pack's back five at 6ft 4in.

Better organised, fitter, more focused, now all Ireland need is the confidence of a first win over Scotland since 1988. With a month's gap to come before the daunting trip to Parc des Princes, where Ireland have never won, the Scottish game is very much the pivotal one of the season.

Bizarrely, given only Terry Kingston of this team has sampled victory over the Scots, a nation expects. This is indeed dangerous, but for once the Irish may be justified in their eternal optimism.



## sport

## Dancing Bear cubs take to the ice

KEITH ELLIOTT  
at large

Blood splattered across the ice. Simon Smith, his tongue split wide open, was hauled off to hospital. It was the sort of injury every parent dreads. His father, Brian, passed a sleepless night at his son's bedside, wondering how badly his seven-year-old would be scarred. A simple indictment, you may feel, of a parent's foolishness at allowing children still at infant school to play one of the world's most violent games – and you would be hopelessly wrong. Simon's injury was the result of a fall while learning to ice-skate. Far from instilling a paranoia about frozen water, the incident led, in a convoluted way, to him becoming one of Britain's best young ice hockey players.

To the uninitiated, ice hockey is 12 Michelin men playing GBH, bushido on ice. But if that's so, how come thousands of parents are happy to let their offspring (some as young as three) play the game?

Ice hockey for teenagers is flourishing. The sport is growing at 15 per cent a year, and most of those newcomers are youngsters. David Pickles, general secretary of the British Ice Hockey Association, says, "About three-quarters of the players are now under 16. This is a massive growth area."

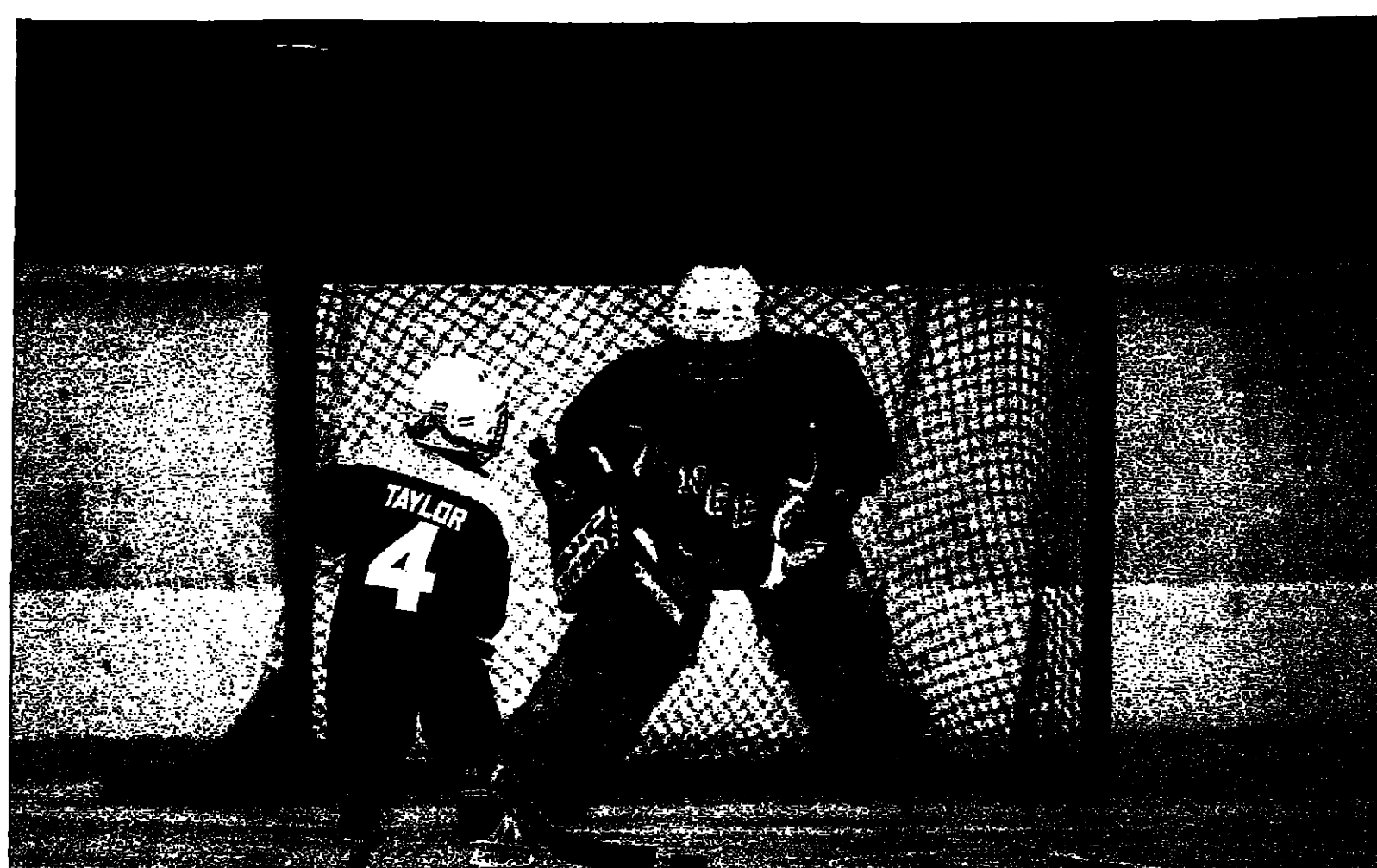
The Medway Bears typify this growth. They are not particularly famous or successful, nor do they have a lucrative sponsorship deal. The Gillingham ice rink owes its design to the Russian brutalist school, and it is inconveniently positioned on a business park outside town. But youngsters are flocking to join in. At Monday's

practice session for the Under-12s, more than 40 turned up, with the youngest aged just four. Brian Smith is the Bears' manager and owner. "This is an excellent game for youngsters," he said. "I think it is the speed that attracts them, plus the fact that they can get aggressive and it is allowed to a degree. But they soon learn there is always someone bigger and better than yourself."

Ice hockey may look like a brutalised mayhem, but discipline is a word that Smith uses constantly. "I have boys on the team who would be thugs and in constant trouble with the police if it wasn't for ice hockey. But it isn't an excuse for them to have a fight. That would be letting down the team." Any youngsters caught smoking are dropped from his sides, and when asked what benefits he thinks his sons have gained from ice hockey, he replies: "Self-discipline, character and being part of a team."

Simon, his tongue fully mended, is now 16 and has been net-minder for the Great Britain Under-16 squad for the past two years. Andrew, 11, learnt to skate when he was three and played in an under-12 competition aged just four. He has played for England Under-12s and is a regular member of the Bears Under-16 side. Despite his slight stature – he is only a few inches above 4ft – he fearlessly harries rivals who look twice his size. "He is a superb skater and has such vision," Smith says proudly. "You don't have to be a giant to play this game, but you need to skate well."

To this end, the Bears' cubs



Youth opportunity: Four-year-old Jack Taylor practises at the Gillingham Ice Rink, home of the Medway Bears

Photograph: Peter Jay

get help from Tim Chilcott, a pro skating coach whose seven-year-old son Luke plays ice hockey, too. Figure skating carries unfortunate images of *Comet Dan* costumes and scented rose-water aftershave. But it proves invaluable for injecting basic skills like stopping and turning. Chilcott says: "I teach the youngsters techniques. Once they have these right, they can concentrate on the game rather than thinking about how to stop. It's the

same team, with a different gravity." Just watch ice hockey live, and it's easy to see why even under-16 teams attract a following of admiring girls. You quickly ignore the fact that at junior level, everything is done on a budget, and basic things like players' names on their backs have been made by mum's rather than a pro outfitter (one lad's name, spelt out in capitals, looked more like NODDY than MOODY). That heavy padding

makes the players look powerful enough to fell Rocky with a one-finger shove. When they take off helmets and carapaces, it's a shock to see normal, unremarkable teenagers emerge from the chrysalis. On the ice, it's a different story. Even at kiddie level, the game is very, very fast. With the puck whizzing at up to 100mph like a fiercely tipped ball on an ice pinball, and the players travelling at 20mph or more. It makes even the most frantic kick-and-run

football team look like geriatrics. It's better value, too. But what about that violent reputation? Well, at under-12 level, body-checking is not allowed at all, and is instantly penalised. "People think it is all rough and tough. It's a physical game, but it's more a game of skill and speed," Smith says. "I've been involved for six years, and none of my kids has had a serious injury."

Big rewards could be just round the corner for today's best

young players. Sky now screens the sport twice a week, the much-awaited Superleague looks like being up and running next year, and ice rinks love the sport for the income it generates. With some games attracting 3,000 spectators at £5 or more a time, plus spin-offs, you don't even have to be an imported star to earn money as a player – though it may be some while before British players achieve contracts like Wayne Gretzky's \$25.5m (£16.75m).

## Platt to undergo more surgery 'Rebel' clubs' cause for relief

## Football

David Platt yesterday had his second knee operation in five months – and admitted that he had never been fully fit for Arsenal.

The 29-year-old England midfielder needed surgery to repair a left knee cartilage torn in two places after playing just four Premier League games following his £4.75m move from Sampdoria. He missed nine games while recovering but yesterday had to

undergo an operation on the same knee which revealed a piece of floating cartilage. Platt, who expects to be out for "a few weeks", said: "The unfortunate truth is that I have not been 100 per cent fit even once this season."

He has played 15 first-team games since the first operation, including Wednesday's 1-0 FA Cup replay defeat at Sheffield Wednesday, which has prompted manager Bruce Rioch to notify the Arsenal board of three players he wants to sign.

Ilie Dumitrescu yesterday completed a £1.5m move across London to West Ham. The Romanian international, who cost Spurs £2.8m from Steaua Bucharest in August 1994, must now wait for a new work permit which could take two weeks.

Another cross-city move to date is expected to be that of the £500,000-rated goalkeeper Tony Coton from Molineux Road to Old Trafford. Manchester United want the 34-year-old Coton as cover for Peter Schmeichel. Barry Fry, the Birmingham

City manager, met Nigel Clough last night in an attempt to persuade the second-string Liverpool forward to step down to the First Division. "Nigel will have to take a pay cut, but he won't need to play in the Football League," Fry said.

Ferenc Puskas has been named "Goalscorer of the Century" by the International Federation of Football History and Statistics. "I guess I was always nearest the goal," said Puskas, 68, who scored 780 goals in 823 first-class matches.

## Non-League notebook

RUPERT METCALF

The long-running saga of the "rebel" Welsh clubs may not yet be over – but friendly relations between the clubs concerned and the Football Association of Wales have been restored at last.

The FAW has withdrawn its appeal against last year's High Court decision that Newport AFC, of the Beazer Homes League, and the UniBond League outfit, Colwyn Bay, may continue to play in the English non-League pyramid. A settlement regarding costs has also been reached.

David Hando, the Newport chairman, and his Colwyn Bay counterpart met FAW officials last week to discuss the way forward, now that both clubs are members of the FAW once again. "We have re-established good relations," Hando said yesterday. "The FAW now understands that if we are to join the League of Wales, it must be by choice to do so. We will not be

coerced into anything against our will." Colwyn Bay and Newport were obliged to leave both the FAW and their own grounds when they, and other clubs, chose to stay in their English leagues rather than join the League of Wales when it started in 1992. After two years spent in exile they returned home in 1994, but the long-term future of both clubs is not yet assured.

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